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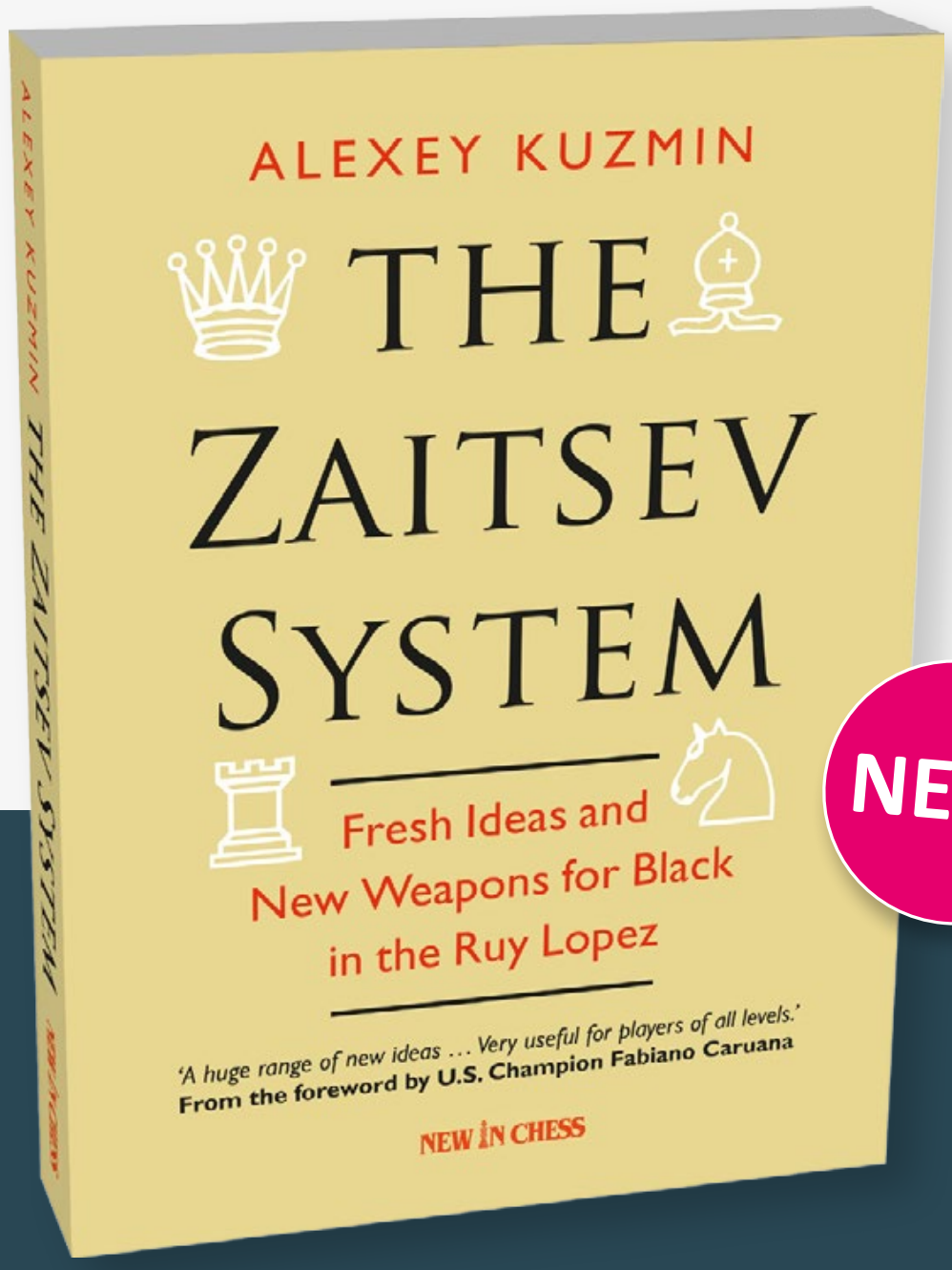
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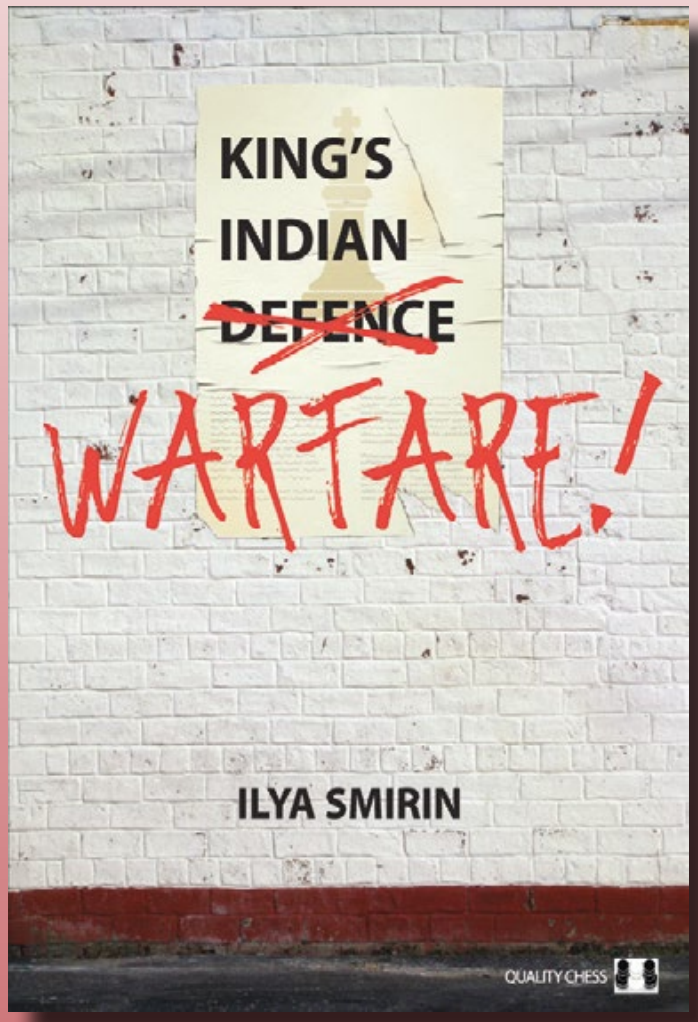

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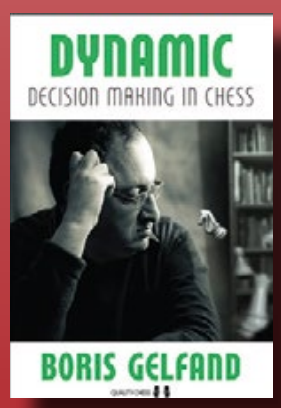

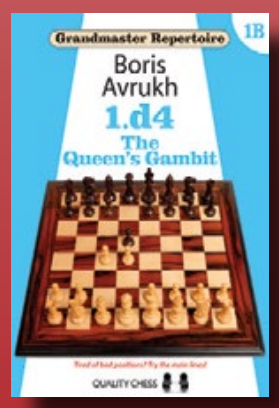

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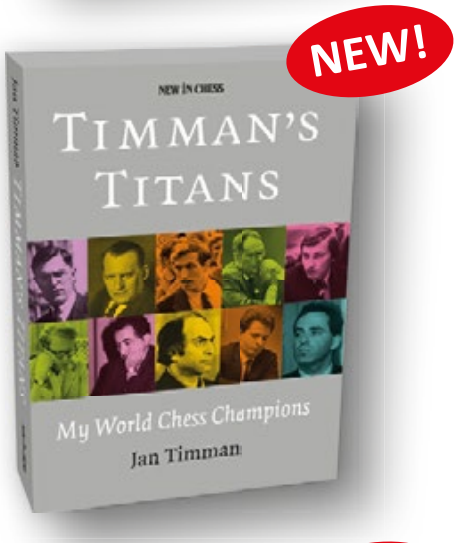

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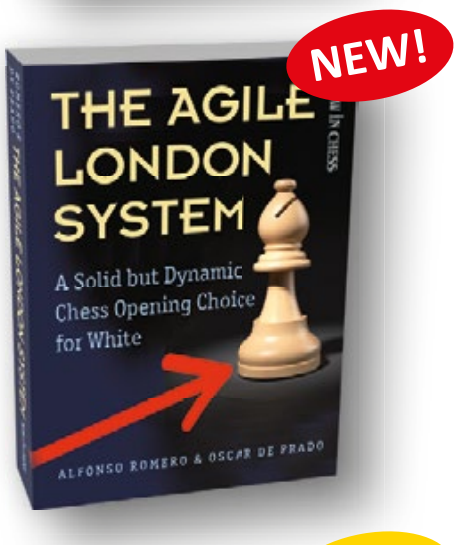

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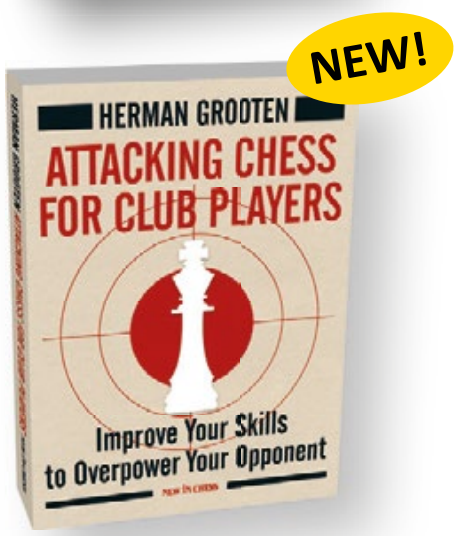

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COVER
Baadur Jobava: Lennart Ootes

'But Carlsen himself knows very well which way the wind is blowing. He predicted Karjakin's success in the Candidates events - at a time when most experts had doubts about Sergey. Thus Magnus anticipated beforehand who he would have to play.' – *Sergey Shipov on the match in New York*

King of Pubs

The Kings Head pub in Bayswater, West London, lent its name to a famous chess club – and during the 1980s, several of the regulars propping up the bar were known to be grandmasters. Also in London there's the aptly titled Drunken Knights club that plays in the Plough near the British Museum.

In the UK, pubs have become one of the most common places to play chess, and several clubs hold their league matches there, where typically they will occupy a room upstairs, the landlord glad of a little extra custom after matches. But from the outside, you wouldn't necessarily associate the pub with chess, unlike the one in the west of Scotland that was recently dubbed by the media as the 'King of Pubs'.

The Pawn, in Alexandria, northwest of Glasgow, hit the news when it unveiled a magnificent new sweeping mural to the full-gable of the popular pub – a giant chess-themed painting with a patriotic aspect to it of Scottish flags and a roaring, heraldic lion on the board. Landlord Mike Reilly said he was inspired by the murals which popped up all over Glasgow during the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

He commissioned Glasgow artist Barry Jenkins, also known as 'Barry the Cat', to do fitting murals for three of his pubs – but The Pawn's new makeover is the one that's attracted the most media attention, and we're hearing it's led to visitors arriving on spec just to play chess with friends over a pint. ■

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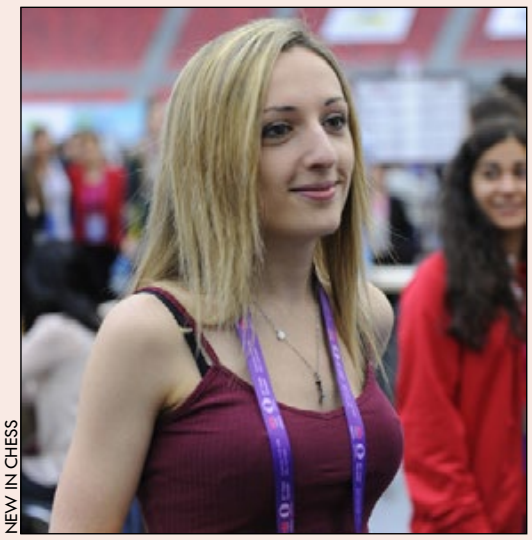
NIC's Café

FIDE Cover-Up

Once again, chess has made headlines, not for any moves made on the board, but because of the ineptitude of FIDE, who see no wrong in awarding the 2017 Women's World Championship to Tehran, Iran. Amazingly, FIDE (who are trotting out the 'no one else made a bid' excuse) have instructed all competitors to comply with the Iranian cover-up laws for women, even while playing.



Nazi Paikidze without hijab at the Olympiad in Baku.

This provoked a strong response, led by the 22-year-old reigning U.S Women's Champion Nazí Paikidze, who has been very vocal in speaking out against being forced to wear a hijab.

Paikidze, who was to make her debut in the Women's World Championship, has now opted to boycott the event, unless there's a change. 'I think it's unacceptable to host a Women's World Championship in a place where women do not have basic fundamental rights and are treated as second-class citizens,' she wrote in an Instagram post. From there, her campaign snowballed and became a major talking point in the mainstream media.

In a petition on the Change.org website (which as we go to press has been signed by more than 15,000 supporters), Paikidze demands either a change of venue for the event, or requires that 'wearing a hijab be optional and (that they) guarantee no discrimination based on gender, nationality or any other human rights as pointed out in the FIDE handbook.' And indeed, there it says: 'FIDE explicitly states its guiding moral principles, and one of them is that the organization "rejects discriminatory treatment for national, racial, social or religious reasons or on account of sex." (F.01(1)(2)). Yet, as Paikidze remarks: 'By awarding the Championship to Iran, it is breaking that pledge to its members, subjecting them to discrimination on all fronts.'

Meanwhile, some think that Paikidze should have been less vocal in her protest over this issue, including Susan Polgar, head of FIDE's commission for women's chess, who believes that the best route would have been for her to make ever-so-quiet private overtures to FIDE about it. Yes, as if that's always worked so well in the past.

But just in case someone in FIDE does see how wrong this is, Paikidze covered all her bases by sending an official complaint as well. We'll see. A FIDE spokesperson commented that it was 'reviewing all possible solutions for the players' comfort and will discuss all the issues with the organizers in Iran during meetings in the next few weeks.'

Chess-Piece Killer

Who could forget the original Hawaii Five-0, the cult American cop drama from the late 1960s with the catchy upbeat signature tune that accompanied the opening shot of a big rolling ocean wave, and with Detective Captain Steve McGarrett (Steve Lord) invariably ending each episode by instructing his subordinate with the legendary catchphrase of 'Book 'em, Danno'?

The series has now been rebooted for today's audience, using the same cast of characters but with new actors. But there's trouble in paradise, as Season 7 takes a villainous chess twist. The storyline requires Steve McGarrett (Alex O'Loughlin) and his elite

These days they are chasing a serial killer that leave chess pieces in his victims' mouths.

task force to find a mysterious chess-obsessed serial killer tagged the 'Chess-Piece Killer', who likes to leave chess pieces in his victims' mouths – as one does.

Far be it from us to issue spoilers here in the Café, but we're guessing that it won't work out well for any of the victims, and that McGarrett, after tracking down the Chess-Piece Killer will be ready for yet another Book 'em, Danno moment.

The Taxman Cometh

That well-known chess fanatic Benjamin Franklin once said that there were only two things certain in life: death and taxes, an oft-quoted cliché that the eccentric English IM, Michael Basman should perhaps have been more aware of, especially the part about taxes.

Basman, who is the founder and brainchild of the world's biggest chess tournament, the Delaney UK Schools Chess Challenge, which involves more than 1,200 schools (and around 45,000 kids nationwide), got himself involved in a long-running dispute

over value-added tax (VAT) on its entry fees, and now faces ruin at the hands of HM Revenue & Custom (HMRC) over a £300,000 tax bill.

For the past 20 years, Basman has run the competition, but was handed an order of bankruptcy at the High Court in London recently, and all because chess, unlike other UK sports, is not VAT-exempt – and this has

JOHN HENDERSON

Michael Basman: £300,000 tax bill. No laughing matter.

now thrown doubts over the future of the popular school competition.

The problem is that Basman's unique event exploded from its humble beginnings, growing exponentially over the years. The 70-year-old concentrated all his efforts on doing the best he could for the many thousands of kids who just wanted to play chess, and neglected the necessary paper work. After his court case Basman commented: 'There's no way I can pay this. I'm a chess teacher and my work is to run a tournament, not to collect tax.'

Basman's rationale here is that there's no point to it all, because if he collects all the VAT, he'll only end up having to fill out endless reams of papers and to hire accountants while the schools will just claim the money back from HMRC anyway, meaning that it will only place a burden on poorer schools. There is an innocent logic to Basman's thinking here of cutting out the middle man, but his well-intentioned aim to keep things simpler for everyone has come down to this one very brutal point: this isn't how HMRC goes about its over-zealous business of collecting taxes.

Indeed, both HMRC and the English Chess Federation had repeatedly warned Basman over the years that he needed to collect and forward VAT on tournament entry fees, or he'd face ruin. We're afraid that – while we agree with much of Basman's sentiments – it was rather foolish of him to have ignored all those warnings, and failed to hire professionals to look after such serious financial matters in the first place.

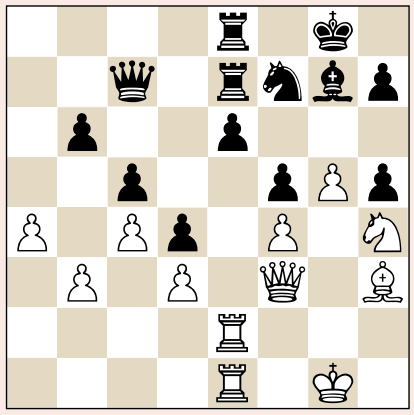
Chess Minister

In many tournaments we see a big-shot politician thinking about the ceremonial opening move for a World Champion, but in the recent Baku Olympiad, the high-ranking government minister made all the moves against a World Champion in what turned out to be one of the biggest upset wins of the biennial competition.

Hou Yifan, the Women's World Champion and world number 1, sensationally lost to WGM Dana Reizniece-Ozola of Latvia, a player rated more than 400 points lower than her and the women's world number 318. And it wasn't by a fluke or a blunder, but with an impressive sacrificial attack.

MARIA EMELIANOVA

Dana Reizniece-Ozola: relaxing from a demanding job by beating the World Champion.



Dana Reizniece-Ozola-Hou Yifan
position after 35...♔g8

36.g6! ♘h6 37.♕xh5 ♕xf4 38.gxh7+ ♔xh7 39.♗xf5+! Crashing through Black's defences and winning material. **39...exf5 40.♖xe7 ♕g3+ 41.♘g2 ♖xe7 42.♖xe7 f4?** A mistake, but the game is lost now anyway. **43.♕e5 ♕g4 44.♕xf4 ♕d1+ 45.♘e1 ♕h5 46.♘f3 ♘f5 47.♖b7** Missing the clinical win with 47.♘g5+, but it's all over anyway. **47...♕g6+ 48.♕g5 ♕e6 49.♕h5+ ♔g8 50.♖b8+ ♗f8 51.♕g4+** 1-0.

That alone would have made the chess news, but the white player also happens to be Latvia's Finance Minister. Reizniece-Ozola, who is also a mother of four, took a vacation from her hectic government schedule to play in her eighth Olympiad. 'I am very satisfied, and not only by the fact that I beat the World Champion – although of course that doesn't happen every day! – but also by the quality of the game', said Reizniece-Ozola. 'My job, being a Finance inister, is a very energy-consuming occupation, while chess is energizing.'

Reizniece-Ozola's peak rating of 2346 came in 2010, before she pursued her political career. Previously, she was the Latvian Economics Minister, and she is now tipped as the future Prime Minister, possibly even as early as after the 2018 elections. As she made the news by beating Hou, one of her ministerial officials was forced to issue a statement to the media confirming that she would not be attending a meeting of all EU finance ministers in Bratislava, Slovakia, as she would still be playing for her country at the Olympiad. ■

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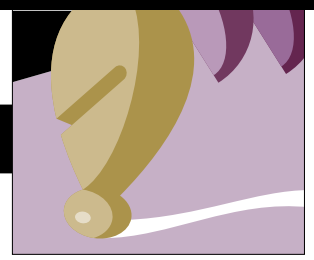
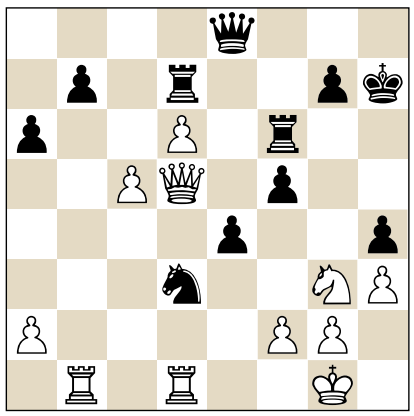


Housequake!

As a keen reader of New In Chess for more than 30 years I have seen hundreds of 'best games' in interviews and questionnaires. As a neurologist I am interested in the association of strong emotions and memory and hence would rather prefer accounts on the 'most emotional game or day in one's chess life'. After all, chess can give you the highest highs and the lowest lows, taking you on a roller coaster of emotions. Rummaging in my CD collection I recently was reminded of my most emotional day in chess, when the classic Prince album *Sign o' the Times* suddenly popped up in my hands.

Innsbruck, Austria, 1987, a beautiful Sunday morning in May. As the local wild card in the U16 world chess championship, I had just lost my longest chess game ever in the second adjournment session to Michael Adams, then IM and one of the favourites in the tournament. Everything seemed okay, until Daniel King, Mickey's coach, casually remarked that the endgame had been a draw. However, Daniel did not give any variations on how to prevent the manoeuvre that had led to the decisive zugzwang.

I went to my room. The idea of having missed a big save was nagging. To make matters worse, later that day I was going to play Gata Kamsky, then 13-year-old prodigy and U18 USSR champion. I was terrified. The prospect of spoiling a nice +2 score within a few hours was too much for my sleep-deprived young heart. There were some bitter tears. Embarrassed, I put on the newly released *Sign o' the Times* vinyl, a precious present from my older sister. After listening to the funky tune 'Housequake' again and again, I made my way to the playing hall determined to at least put up stubborn resistance. In an Italian Giuoco Piano, Gata as Black effortlessly outplayed me. With pending time trouble, however, he handed me an opportunity to...



Topakian-Kamsky
Innsbruck 1987
position after 36...h4

37.♖xd3 ...Housequake! Instead of the calm 37.♘e2 White bluffs his way through the zeitnot phase. **37...exd3 38.♘xf5 ♕e2 39.♘e7 ♖f8?** This loses. 39...♖d8 would have been clearly better for Black. **40.f3 g6 41.♕g5 ♕e6 42.♕xh4+ ♔g7 43.♕d4+ ♔h7 44.♕xd3 ♖f4 45.♖b2 ♖c4 46.♖e2 ♖c1+ 47.♔h2 ♕f6 48.♕d5 ♖d8 49.♖e4 ♖f8 50.♕xb7 ♔h6 51.♕d5 ♕a1 52.♖e6 ♔h7 53.♕e4 1-0**

Shaking hands I felt great relief, but also sympathy for Gata when seeing tears building up in his eyes.

R.I.P., Prince. Your music should be listed as remedy.

Raffi Topakian, MD
Linz, Austria

Respect

Apparently Nigel Short called on the sport's governing body, FIDE, to reject Iran as the venue for next year's Womens' World Championship, telling *The Times*: 'The hijab is a symbol of Islamic repression'. Meanwhile, FIDE's Commission for Women's Chess called on participants to respect 'cultural differences' and accept the regulations.

FIDE's view on this occasion strikes me as right and proper. We must respect other religions and their views rather than attempt to impose our own ideas of what is 'best' for them, as the US is so often guilty of. Let me quote Mitra Hejazipour, a 23-year-old WGM who won the 2015 Asian continental women's championship. In *The Guardian* she said: 'This is going to be the biggest sporting event women in Iran have ever seen; we haven't been able to host any world championship in other sporting fields for women in the past. It's not right to call for a boycott. These games are important for women in Iran; it's an opportunity for us to show our strength.

'Day by day, Iranian women are becoming more empowered and are pushing aside traditional, legal and political discrimination ... Those who are worried for the situation of human rights in Iran, if they are really serious, have to acknowledge these efforts and see these capacities.'

Richard Sugden
via e-mail

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PRODUCTION: Joop de Groot
TRANSLATORS: Ken Neat, Piet Verhagen
SALES AND ADVERTISING: Remmelt Otten

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BANK DETAILS:
IBAN: NL41ABNA 0589126024
BIC: ABNANL2A in favour of Interchess BV, Alkmaar, The Netherlands

WWW.NEWINCHESS.COM

INFOGRAPHIC

World Champions in the Olympiads: Often, but not always dominant

In the Chess Olympiad in Baku, Azerbaijan, Magnus Carlsen, the reigning World Champion, had a good performance by most players' standards: He won five games and drew five. His winning percentage (75 percent) matched his previous best performance in an Olympiad in 2006. By the standards of a World Champion, however, Carlsen's performance was nothing special.

Indeed, during the same Olympiad, Vladimir Kramnik, the ex-World Champion, scored 81.3 percent, which was good enough to clinch an individual gold medal playing on Board 2 for Russia.

Kramnik's performance was more typical of how world champions have done in Olympiads throughout their careers (before, during and after their reigns). Six of the eight highest winning percentages in Olympiads, including the top three, belong to players who wore the crown. The following chart looks at all of their performances. We have included all the undisputed champions as well as Kramnik and Veselin Topalov, who both had strong claims to the throne, though their reigns coincided with the period when there were competing claimants to the title.

DYLAN LOEB McCLAIN

With his high-risk and aggressive style, it is not surprising that Tal has the best winning percentage. What is surprising is how little he lost.

«Iron» Tigran, who was noted for his defensive prowess, only lost once in the Olympiads -- to Robert Hübner in 1972.

Anand has not represented his country at the Olympiad since 2006, when he had a disastrous result -- scoring only 50 percent.

	Olympiads played	Number of games	Wins / Draws / Losses	Olympiad score, in % (Wins + 0.5 draws) / number of games
Mikhail Tal	1958-1962, 1966, 1972-1974, 1980-1982	101	65 / 34 / 2	**81.2**
Anatoly Karpov	1972-1974, 1980-1982, 1986-1988	68	43 / 23 / 2	**80.1**
Tigran Petrosian	1958-1974, 1978	129	78 / 50 / 1	**79.8**
Vassily Smyslov	1952-1960, 1964, 1968-1972	113	69 / 42 / 2	**79.6**
Garry Kasparov	1980-1982, 1986-1988, 1992-1996, 2002	82	50 / 29 / 3	**78.7**
Alexander Alekhine	1930-1935, 1939	72	43 / 27 / 2	**78.5**
Bobby Fischer	1960-1962, 1966, 1970	65	40 / 18 / 7	**75.4**
Mikhail Botvinnik	1954-1964	73	39 / 31 / 3	**74.7**
José Raúl Capablanca	1939	16	7 / 9	**71.9**
Boris Spassky	1962-1970, 1974, 1978, 1984-1988	135	54 / 79 / 2	**69.3**
Veselin Topalov	1994-2000, 2008-2016	85	43 / 30 / 12	**68.2**
Magnus Carlsen	2004-2010, 2014-2016	51	25 / 19 / 7	**67.6**
Vladimir Kramnik	1992-1996, 2006-2016	81	31 / 47 / 3	**67.2**
Viswanathan Anand	1984-1992, 2004-2006	78	32 / 39 / 7	**66.0**
Max Euwe	1927, 1937, 1950, 1954, 1958-1962	87	35 / 39 / 13	**62.6**

Source : Olimpbase

Fair & Square

Larry Fitzgerald: 'Crossword puzzles, Sudoku ... I'm good at all those things. It's not daily, but I'll do stuff on the airplane. I love playing chess. It's my favourite game.'
(As a new American Football season gets underway, the Arizona Cardinals wide receiver gives his tips on what he does as he travels to away games)

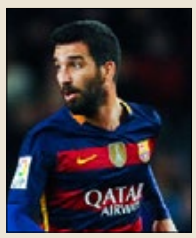
Jon Kiner: 'Of all the bike disciplines, it's the one where you don't have to be the strongest guy in the pack. Fitness always helps, but they are so tactical ... it's like a chess match going 25 miles an hour. I love that part of it.'
(The US criterium cycling pro racer)

Lady Gaga:'I like to play chess, I think that it's fun.'
(The pop diva, in a recent interview with The Sun tabloid newspaper, revealing that she would like to date someone who knows their way around a chessboard)

Boris Spassky: 'When Viktor Kortchnoi has White, he puts all his pieces on the wrong squares in the opening so he can spend the next twenty moves correcting himself.'

Mikhail Tal: 'Mother, today I became the youngest ex-World Champion!'
(Tal, telephoning his mother on the day in 1961 when he lost his return match to Mikhail Botvinnik – a record he still holds today!)

Salli Landau: 'A lot of people have said that if Tal had looked after his health, if he hadn't led such a dissolute life... But with people like Tal, the idea of "if only" is just absurd. He wouldn't have been Tal then.'
(The Russian actress first wife of Mikhail Tal, answering speculative 'if only' questions about her ex-husband if he had led a healthier lifestyle)



Arda Turan: 'From the outside, it's like chess, which looks easy to play, but just like tiki-taka, it's not. Everyone has a duty, a position, and everyone is fulfilling their duties. It's exactly like a game of chess and it's not that easy at all.'
(The Barcelona midfielder, quoted by goal.com, on the possession-based style of football adopted by the Catalonia club during the reign of former manager Pep Guardiola)

Pal Benko: 'Patience is the most valuable trait of the endgame player.'

David Foster Wallace: 'Tax Law is like the world's biggest chess game with all sorts of weird conundrums about ethics and civics and consent of the governed built in. For me, it's a bit like math. I have no talent for it but find it still erotically interesting.'
(The late American novelist and essayist, in an email to his friend, the novelist Jonathan Franzen, published in his 2012 short story 'Every Love Story is a Ghost Story')

Jesse Kraai: 'Get fit. Don't eat crap. Chess, like life, is going to feel like a throw-down – no matter what metaphysical sugar people like J. Kraai sometimes coat it with. The game will push you to your limits. Be ready for it.'
(A heartfelt piece of advice from the US grandmaster)

Levon Aronian: 'Every time I have a good tournament, people say I'm a good player. Every time I have a bad tournament people say I'm a good guy.'

John J. Ross: 'If drink is the curse of the working classes and work is the curse of the drinking classes then chess is the curse of the thinking classes.'

Channing Tatum: 'I'm a fat kid on the inside. I love food so much, and I fluctuate about 25 to 30 pounds between movies. I feel like I have to do a chess movie that requires very little movement at some point, just so I can eat pizza and play chess on the beach all day.'

'Rowdy' Ronda Rousey: 'For me, MMA is like speed chess. It's like I'm herding a person into a certain position. Say my endgame is an arm bar. I'm not gonna actually take you and put you there. What I'm going to do is convince you that it's a good idea to move in the direction I want you to go.'
(The American top mixed martial artist, judoka, and actress)

Who will win the World Championship match?

Yes, but what if...

This article could have been very short.

We all know that Magnus Carlsen is a stronger player than Sergey Karjakin. His results are consistently higher, and his rating curve is steeper. Magnus has far more titles, and a greater experience of fighting for the Championship. Experts point out (and I would confirm this) that the Champion has a more universal playing style than the Challenger. He is a more versatile player and he has no weak points. Carlsen is accustomed to winning. He is able to dominate and impose his will. And, finally, he is simply superior!

So, Carlsen is stronger than Karjakin... You have to repeat this phrase 20 times in succession, and then reply to the question 'Who will win the match?' Immediately, without thinking about it.

That is what many do, and in their way they will be right. My article is intended for those who are accustomed to seriously analysing every move and who do not draw serious conclusions without a preparatory, independent study of the question.

The match in New York forces us to remember historic analogies, when the Challenger was rated far lower than the Champion.

For example, Buenos Aires 1927. In those times Capablanca was God. His superiority over other players seemed absolute. That is, far more obvious than Carlsen's current superiority. And who at that time was Alekhine? He is now called great and unique. He is regarded as a chess genius – on a par with Capablanca. But at that time, in September 1927, the Russian Champion was merely a well-known player, who had won a number of tournaments and demonstrated his exceptional strength. But compared with the Champion he was merely a worker bee, whose wings apparently did not have the required span. The score of the individual meetings between the players at the start of the match was +5 –0 =7 in Capablanca's favour. He had left Alekhine behind in all the tournaments where they both competed. For example, in the spring of 1927 the Cuban had confidently finished ahead of the Russian Champion at the tournament in New York. All the indicators, all the parameters were in his favour.

The simple facts seem to heavily favour Magnus Carlsen in the upcoming clash with Sergey Karjakin in New York. But facts don't win matches. Russian GM and star commentator SERGEY SHIPOV delves deeper as he assesses the chances of the Champ and the Challenger.

But who won the match for the title? Alekhine.

Let us move on a little further and remember Euwe's match with Alekhine in 1935. The Dutch grandmaster did not have a halo of greatness, and he did not have such a striking talent as the Champion. However, this did not prevent him from winning the title. Contrary to the forecasts.

What could the ageing Botvinnik

The last time Magnus Carlsen and Sergey Karjakin met before their match in New York was at the Bilbao Masters Final last July. Carlsen won with White and drew with Black, a result that must have boosted the confidence of the Norwegian's fans.

hope for, after losing the title in a match with the young, brilliant Tal? How could he win the return match in 1961? After all, time was against him... But he won.

There is also an example closer to us. Before the 2000 match in London, Kasparov had won ten super-tournaments in a row. While Kramnik had not only regularly finished behind the Champion, but had also lost an elimination match to Shirov. But it was he who won in the confrontation with the Champion – moreover, without losing a single game.

Failing favourites

What is it that links all these matches? In the first instance I would like to say that it was with some help to the Challengers on the part of the Champions.

Capablanca did not maintain a fully competitive regime. For example, legends are told about his numerous women during the time of the match in Buenos Aires.

Alekhine altogether flagrantly violated this regime during the match with Euwe. Russian style.

Tal agreed to begin the return match when he was not fully healthy, clearly over-rating his chances.

And Kasparov simply underestimated Kramnik, lulled by the sense of his own greatness. Garry himself characterized that condition with the verb 'set in bronze'. He became a monument to himself.

On the other hand, in all the listed instances public opinion clearly overrated the Champions and underestimated their opponents, which is quite understandable. It is typical of us to glorify idols and debase their rivals. This is a consequence of man's religious nature...

But in reality the difference in playing strength of the players in those matches was not great. And the Challengers did not have to achieve anything impossible.

And also in principle... In order to become Champion, you don't have to be a genius. You don't have to be an exceptional phenomenon in chess. You don't even have to play stronger than the opponent. It is sufficient simply to win one specific match. And that's all! For this you have to arrive for the first game in slightly better form than the opponent. Prepare more ideas in the opening. Be better tuned up for a battle. Accidentally win one game – and hold out in the others. This is quite sufficient.

In this context, note should be made of the brevity of the match in New York. A dozen games is essentially a sprinting distance. It only needs one player to lose a couple of opening duels at the start of the match, or commit one or two painful mistakes,

and later it will be extremely difficult to catch up. Even with a superiority in strength, it may not be possible. After all, nowadays many are able to defend difficult positions. Apart from anyone else, in this respect Karjakin's mastery cannot be denied.

Essential prerequisites

Incidentally, about components.

Let me directly point out the Challenger's strong aspects, which may come to his aid in the forthcoming battle.

■ Excellent calculation of variations. I well remember Sergey when he was 13-14 years old. I myself played several games with him. He compensated for certain deficiencies in positional play and opening erudition by his ability to find his way in complicated positions. As soon as complications began, the youngster would regularly outplay adults and objectively stronger opponents. With the years this weapon of Karjakin has only been strengthened.

■ Deep opening preparation. Sergey always liked and was able to make a high-quality analysis of opening variations, and now he has at his disposal a strong team of Russian analysts. For the match he will no doubt prepare numerous deep-water mines, on which the Champion's ship may founder.

■ Solid and flexible nervous system. Karjakin is able to endure great tension and not suffer obvious breakdowns. Even in the most complicated situations he believes in himself and fights to the last bullet. When pressed, he does not crack. He controls well his emotions and feelings. Last year's World Cup in Baku was a vivid demonstration of Sergey's nervous endurance.

■ Physical stability. Sergey is able to retain his freshness towards the end of a tournament. Remember how lively he looked towards the end of the Candidates Tournament in Moscow – when his rivals were already spent. So that in the last games of the match and especially in a tie-break (oh, how I would like to see and commentate on it!) Sergey's chances will be considerable.

■ Colossal motivation! This point is a general one for all World Championship matches. For the Challenger, victory is always more needed. For him it is something new and the most important event in his life. But for the Champion it is no longer the first... or even far from the first match. Karjakin, without any doubt, will regard the match in New York as the peak of his career and the main chance of going down in history. But what will it be for Carlsen? Merely another episode. Another Challenger has come his way? Well, he'll have to play him...

'Only by recognizing the reality of defeat will Carlsen be able to avoid it.'

In general, the moods will be rather different.

A risk for Carlsen also comes from comparing Anand with Karjakin. It is one thing to play an ageing Maestro who has already achieved everything in life, who at some point soon will allow himself to relax and rid himself of the tension. And quite another with a young, hungry wolf, who has reached his peak and is ready to fight to the death.

Frankly speaking, it seemed to me that in the Sochi match Anand did not greatly believe in his strength. His objective consisted in playing worthily and earning money for his family. And he did this. Whereas for Karjakin, money and image now concern him far less. Compared with the title this is a trifle – especially if it is borne in mind that this title will subsequently give everything in greater quantity.

Magnus will have to tune himself up for a fierce battle. He will have to prepare better than he has done previously. Only by recognizing the reality of defeat will he be able to avoid it. By not repeating the mistakes of Kasparov – who, incidentally, will probably be alongside the Champion during the match... I am sure that Garry will suggest to his young successor how not to act in such a situation.

But Carlsen himself knows very well which way the wind is blowing. He predicted Karjakin's success in the Candidates events – at a time when most experts had doubts about Sergey. Thus Magnus anticipated beforehand who he would have to play. He watchfully followed all his rivals and worked out who were the most dangerous, disregarding ratings and other unreliable arbitrary factors.

It is probable that engraved on the Champion's memory are those two super-tournaments in Stavanger, when the current Challenger finished ahead of him. That is, the syndrome of Capablanca, who had everywhere finished ahead of Alekhine, should not be repeated by Carlsen.

That Magnus is unlikely to surround himself with a crowd of admirers and violate the competitive regime during the match is something that need not be said. But I will say it.

The opening intrigue

In general, I expect to see an outstanding match. With a high standard of play and great tension.

The main opening intrigue remains the same – how to combat the Berlin Variation of the Ruy Lopez? Everyone says that Carlsen will use it with Black, and in reply Karjakin with White will play the anti-Berlin or the quiet Italian Game. In general, set-ups with the pawn on d3. But, of course, with a store of minor but venomous ideas.

With White Magnus will probably anticipate the Queen's Indian Defence, in which Sergey, in my view, is excessively principled in his choice. Here surprises may await us. Beginning with the first move! That

‘Karjakin will no doubt prepare numerous deep-water mines, on which the Champion’s ship may founder.’

is, what the Challenger will play in reply to 1.d4! is a great mystery. The banal, but for all that no less solid Queen’s Gambit cannot be ruled out. Not without reason has it been called the opening of matches for the World Championship. It is possible that Karjakin will also want to maintain this tradition, seeing as current theory does not cause Black any great anxiety.

Of course, the English Opening should also be expected, and, moreover, both opponents may play it with White. There is scope there for investigation and for new, powerful preparations.

Lifting a heavy slab

Now I will say a few words about the capabilities of the players. It is an eternal problem for chess players – at the necessary moment to demonstrate all of which they are capable. But who of us knows what in fact he is capable of? We, the commentators, like to talk about the readiness of players to produce their maximum, but we have absolutely no knowledge what this maximum is!

The real possibilities of our organism, and of our brain in particular, are a mystery for us ourselves. The phrase ‘we usually do not give fully one hundred per cent’ would be too mild. Scientists think that a person uses his brain at a maximum of 5-10%. And our organism in general, most probably, uses only a small percentage of its real capabilities.

To overcome laziness, habit and, above all, the instinct of self-preservation (which is what safeguards us against overloading) is an extremely difficult or altogether insoluble problem. It occurs only in exceptional and extreme situations. And in history there are numerous examples of it. There was a well-known instance when a young and feeble woman lifted a heavy slab, when her son was underneath it. Despite the fact that in everyday life or on the sports field she would have been unable to lift any comparable weight. Her innate maternal instinct gave her organism colossal motivation, and in it there appeared previously unknown powers.

In sport it is extremely difficult to create such a super-condition. But people work on this, and sometimes they are able to rise above themselves. Then athletes literally die in the stadium, runners at the finish of a difficult distance lose consciousness, or boxers forget about pain and blood...

In chess there is not such an obvious dependence between desire and quality of play. However you try, it is difficult to understand what you do not understand or know. However hard you fight, the weak aspects in your preparation will invariably tell. But desire helps you to maintain concentration when physical tiredness sets in, and also to find the strength to fight for a win when the organism is already striving by reflex to remove the tension.

In this respect both players in the forthcoming match are very strong.

Magnus Carlsen – Sergey Karjakin

The score so far

Classical: 21 games, 12-9
(+4, –1, =16)

Rapid (incl. blindfold): 14 games, 8-6
(+6 –4 =4)

Blitz: 12 games, 8½-3½
(+8 –3 =1)

Carlsen always aims for a win, and Karjakin will be helped by the stimulus of becoming Champion. It is necessary only to add something.

I hope that one of them will be able to ‘lift a heavy slab’. For example, work out an incredibly complicated and deep combination. Or delve into prophylactic thinking to unknown depths. This is especially needed by Karjakin.

On the other hand, it is not essential for the players without fail to ‘lift a slab’. One can look at things from another aspect. For success it is sufficient to raise not your upper plank, but the lower one. This is that minimal level of concentration and calculation, which players maintain all 100% of the time. That is, play consistently at a high level, not making any noticeable mistakes. Do you remember what in his time Smyslov used to say? ‘I endeavour to make 40 good moves on the board. If the opponent does the same, the result is a draw. But if he doesn’t, then...’ This is play with a high lower plank. Some of these moves may not be the strongest. The drawing tendencies of chess are quite great, so that the performing of good moves practically ensures a draw.

If the two approaches are continued and combined, we obtain an amusing formula: ‘For success you need to raise the lower plank to the upper!’ But this is already the ideal in the field of computer programs. It is unlikely that we can ever expect this of people.

Conclusion

And now my traditional forecast. I will not give probabilities and percentages – this is too banal.

The match will be won... by Carlsen, of course. If he does not lose a couple of games with stupid mistakes – such as what occurred during the 6th game of the match in Sochi, and was not in fact exploited by Anand.

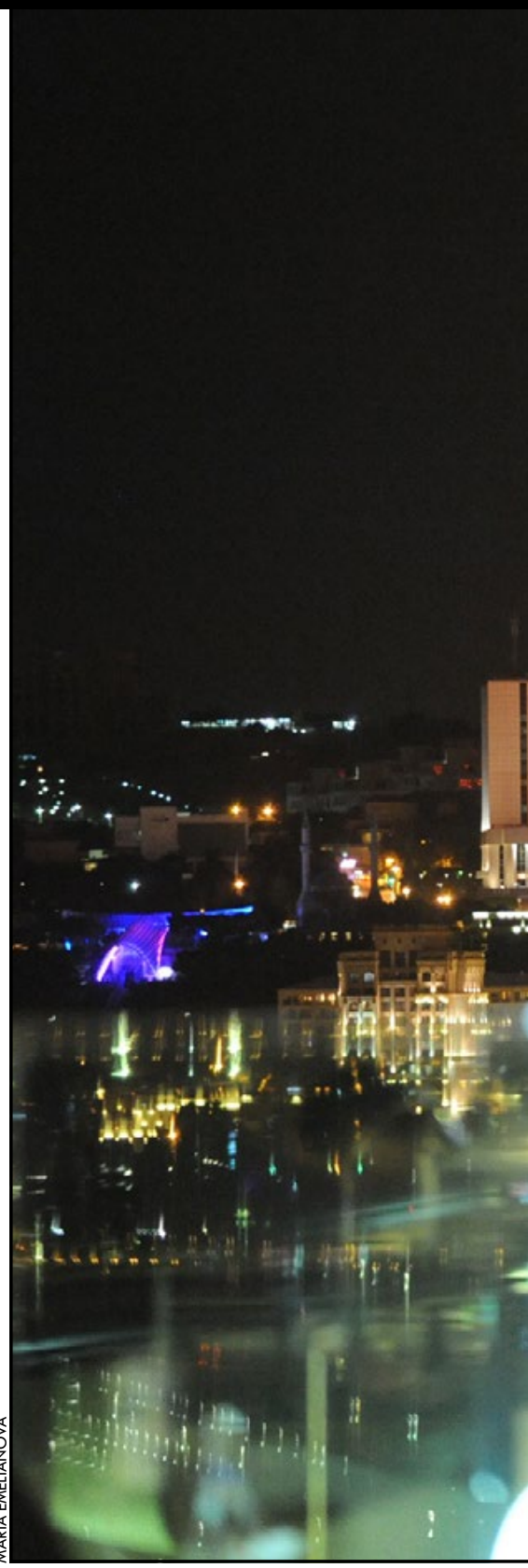
But Karjakin will raise the slab, implementing his ‘paternal instinct’. I will be rooting for him. Suppose it were to happen? ■

A warm welcome in the Land of Fire

Baku Olympiad sets new benchmark

MARIA EMELIANOVA

Leyla Aliyeva, the President's daughter, comes up with a clever move for Magnus Carlsen.



MARIA EMELIANOVA

The 42nd Chess Olympiad in Baku welcomed teams from 146 countries in the Open section and 136 in the Women's section, many of them hoping for glory, many more looking forward to simply enjoying that wonderful biennial gathering of old and new friends. The organizers had promised to stage the best Olympiad ever. 'Best' is always hard to define, but they certainly came very close. **DIRK JAN TEN GEUZENDAM** shares his impressions.

Over the past decade, Baku has undergone a spectacular metamorphosis in a building spree that has given the capital numerous landmarks, such as the iconic Flame Towers, a breath-taking tribute to the 'Land of Fire' that rises high above Baku and turns into a light show every night.

On the last day of the Olympiad, I take a taxi to the Crystal Hall, where the final round is to start at 11 a.m., four hours earlier than the other rounds. My hotel is situated close to the rightly famous tree-lined Baku Boulevard along the Caspian Sea. The Crystal Hall is sitting on a new piece of land some two kilometres further down the coastline that from a distance looks like a pier jutting into the sea. Traffic is busy without being chaotic, the weather is hot and sunny. Across the road there are banners with images of Mamedyarov, Radjabov and the other members of the Azeri team. And banners with Magnus Carlsen and Hou Yifan. We also pass big screens that display a short film about the Olympiad.

A good number of the taxis around us are English cabs that first appeared here for the Eurovision Song Contest in 2011, which was actually also the reason why the Crystal Hall was built. Now the cabs are painted in the colours of the Olympiad and have the Olympiad logo on their doors. As has the huge coach that we overtake – one of many coaches that, escorted by police cars, take the players from their various luxury hotels to the venue and back. But we're only briefly in the lead. On the last stretch, where the traffic is less dense and there are fewer speed restrictions, the police car speeds past us, followed by the bus.

While the bus is allowed to enter the vast expo ground, my taxi is not, and the driver drops me off at one of the entrances. Walking from here all the way to the entrance of the Crystal Hall would be no fun with this heat and the fierce wind from the sea, but barely have I alighted from the car or I am whisked onto a golf cart that takes me where I want to go. The golf carts are manned by volunteers, a couple of dozen of a huge army of

friendly and helpful volunteers that made the Baku Olympiad such a special event.

Because it's the last day, more players than usual are taking photos along the waterfront with the waves of the Caspian Sea glistening in the sun. And the hall, too, is abuzz with last-round excitement and everyone taking pictures of everyone as souvenirs to take home. Particularly popular as always are group pictures of teams who take part mainly to realize their ambition to be photographed with one of the stars. For the next two years they will cherish these memories and then they hope to be back again for the next Olympiad in Batumi, Georgia, in 2018.

With teams from 146 countries competing in the Open Section and 136 countries in the Women's Section – amazing numbers – it is inevitable that the goals of all these teams were quite different, but no matter whom I spoke to, everyone seemed to agree that the Baku Olympiad was a wonderful chess feast that will rank as one of the best Olympiads ever. Perhaps even the best, but such qualifications often depend on personal preferences and priorities.

With a budget that was rumoured to be a record 15 million euro and a huge and dedicated organisational staff, there was indeed little the participants could complain about. They were staying in excellent hotels, transportation was convenient and comfortable, and the venue was spacious and well-equipped. In fact, the complaints that were raised were mostly connected to an over-eager wish to think of everything. The security guards in particular stuck to their instructions with such rigour that they drove many a player and journalist to despair. In the course of the event they became a bit more flexible, but for many participants it remained frustrating that they were banned from areas where they had hoped to follow particular chess matches or meet friends.

The restriction of players to the section where their match took place was indeed painful. Living legends of chess playing in lower sections were not allowed to watch the top games, which made one of them sigh that 'chess has lost its humanity'. He also felt unhappy about the strict anti-cheating measures: 'We cannot have a watch or a pen; it feels as if we stand accused.'

'At the end of the afternoon, I will be here again in an empty hall with all games finished and no one knowing who has won the Olympiad in the Open section!'

His bitterness was understandable, but unfortunately so were most of the anti-cheating measures in force, with the clear exception of the proviso that players could be searched players during the games, a measure that rightly met with a lot of anger. Nigel Short deals with it in his column and I gladly refer the reader to those pages.

Another ill-received rule was that a player wishing to visit the bathroom had to inform the arbiter. This was not only regarded as a breach of the players' privacy, but it was also easy to foresee what chaos would arise if every player had to go to his or her arbiter whenever nature called. Judit Polgar, the captain of the Hungarian team, drew up a letter of protest and collected so many signatures that this unfortunate rule was soon rescinded.

For Azerbaijan the Olympiad was part of the government's emphatic wish to put the oil-rich country firmly on the world map. Over the past decade, Baku has undergone a spectacular metamorphosis in a building spree that has given the capital numerous landmarks, from the spectacular Museum of Modern Art designed by Altay Sadikh-zadeh to the iconic Flame Towers, a breath-taking tribute to the 'Land of Fire'

LENNART OOTES

The Crystal Hall, the venue of the 42nd Chess Olympiad, by night.

MARIA EMELIANOVA

On the first day the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, came to visit. On his left Olympiad Director Mahir Mammedov, on his right FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov.

that rises high above Baku and turns into a light show every night.

Hand in hand with the modernization and beautification of Baku, Azerbaijan has started organizing international sports events like the European Games, the Baku Formula 1 and the Chess Olympiad. On the first day, the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, son of 'the father of modern Azerbaijan', Heydar Aliyev, visited the Crystal Hall. Later, his daughters Arzu and Leyla paid a few visits.

Having the Olympiad in Baku guaranteed excellent conditions for all visitors, but it also had regrettable consequences, as Azerbaijan is officially at war with Armenia over the conflicted Nagorno-Karabakh region. When the Olympiad was awarded to Azerbaijan, the president of the Azeri chess federation assured the FIDE General Assembly that everyone would be welcome, including the representatives of Armenia. Before the Olympiad the guarantee of their safety was repeated with a reference to last year's World Cup in Baku, where Armenian players took place. Nevertheless Armenia didn't send any teams to Baku, probably because the tension between the two countries grew considerably on the eve of the event. This was a great pity, of course, if only because Armenia took gold in three(!) of the five most recent Olympiads.

The Azeri-Armenian conflict also affected other players. Swiss GM Yannick Pelletier only got his visa after he had officially apologized in a letter to the Ministry of Affairs for his participation in a chess tournament in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenia might have been one of the contenders for the top spots, but the absolute favourite in Baku was once again Russia, even though they had not won the Olympiad since 2002, when Baku-born Garry Kasparov led them to gold in Bled. With an average rating of 2768, three points more than the star-studded team of the United States, Russia seemed to be the force to watch, because they had the more balanced team. And as their new captain, the president of the Russian Chess Federation, Andrei Filatov, emphasized, they had done everything in their preparation that was needed. It was also his plan to let Sergey Karjakin play on Board 1, a responsibility that he saw as an inevitable test for his match against Carlsen. Apparently, the higher-rated Vladimir Kramnik didn't mind too much. Or maybe he did a bit, since he was the clear star of the team with a 2903 performance.

One might argue that the Russians lost the Olympiad in half an hour, in their match against Ukraine. Nothing much to worry about was going on when suddenly Alexander Grischuk undermined his position against Andrey Volokitin, and seeing this dramatic turn, Evgeny Tomashevsky on Board 2 felt the pressure and had turned a drawish position in a loss before he knew it.

When I enter the arena of the Crystal Hall, where everyone is ready for their last game, I cannot know that at the end of the afternoon, I will be here again in an empty hall with all games finished and no one knowing who has won the Olympiad in the Open section! But this is really what happened. At the start of the final round, USA and Ukraine had the same number of match points, 18, two match points ahead of Russia. Both leaders did what they had to do. USA beat Canada (with Evgeny Bareev on first board!) 2½-1½, while Ukraine destroyed Slovenia 3½-½. Which meant…? No one knew – until after lots of calculating, speculating and guessing, it became clear that Team USA had won the gold medals.

As American captain John Donaldson commented: 'This was an incredibly hard-fought Olympiad. Ever since the scoring system was changed to match-points instead of board-points in Dresden, the winning team has achieved gold with 19 points. Ukraine's 20 this year was only good enough for silver, while Russia had a strong performance, overall winning quite a bit of rating with strong showings by Kramnik and Nepomniachtchi. At the end of the day, team USA's performance was simply too good. Wesley (So) was clearly the hero of the team, crushing the third board, but with Fabiano (Caruana)'s individual bronze medal, Hikaru (Nakamura)'s important victories on Board 2, and Ray (Robson) and Sam (Shankland) contributing to the team in key matches, it was clear that everyone had stepped up their game.'

While it was a great moment of historic importance for the Americans, it was a bitter pill for the Ukrainians. Once the dust had settled, first board Pavel Eljanov had this to say: 'This was a great Olympiad, both in terms of the level of organization and of sporting intrigue! We were close and, I believe, we also deserved gold, the same as USA, but the "stars" decided otherwise.'

The story of the American victory can be found in Alejandro Ramirez's special report from Baku. The Ukrainians feature prominently in the games selection further on in this issue.

Much will remain untold for now, which is inevitable with a sporting event of this magnitude. It was a great Olympiad, in which World Champion Magnus Carlsen led a young Norwegian team to fifth place, a new high in his country's chess history, and in which the young team of India once again showed their class by finishing fourth. After six rounds they were topping the table, alone, which had never happened in the history of Indian chess before. But then they lost badly to the American powerhouse. China, the defending champions, were unrecognizable and shockingly had to settle for 13th place. But the Chinese women saved the honour of their country by finally winning gold again after a direct confrontation with defending champions Russia in the final round. Their victory will also be marked by a special report.

I'd like to conclude with a tribute to the Olympiad as a unique phenomenon recognized by anyone who has ever attended this wonderful biennial gathering of old and new friends. One of the people I had been hoping to meet in Baku was Eugene Torre, not only because he is a great player and a great person, but also because he is the Olympiad record-holder. This was going to be his 23rd Olympiad since his debut in Siegen in 1970. And he still regrets that he didn't play in Dresden in 2008 – although he was there as team captain – because of a dispute with his federation, If he had not missed out on that one, this would have been his 24th Olympiad as a player.

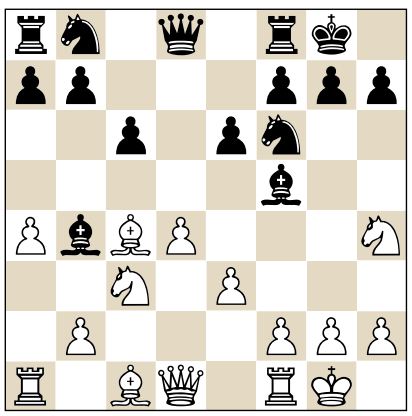
Of course Eugene Torre was in Baku; what's more he was in excellent form! When we finally met, he had scored seven points from his first eight games. Little did we know then that he would also win his remaining three games. His fantastic score of 10 from 11 won him the bronze medal on Board 3 with a 2836 performance (his current rating having dwindled to 2447!). It goes without saying that he was delighted as well, and he kindly accepted our invitation to annotate one of his games.

The following game was played in Round 9 in the match between Argentina and the Philippines. In the first eight rounds, Torre had scored two draws, one with Black against Norway's Aryan Tari, and six wins, including victories against GMs Rombaldoni (2567) of Italy and Salgado (2662) of Spain.

NOTES BY
Eugene Torre

Diego Flores
Eugene Torre
Baku 2016 (9)
Slav, Dutch Variation

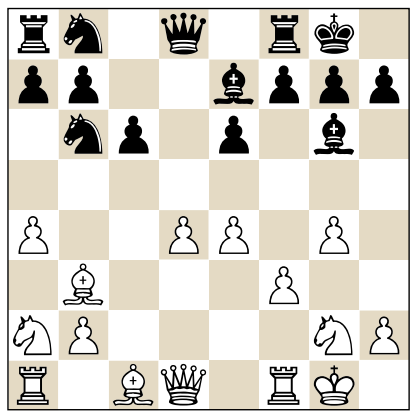
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♗f5 6.e3 e6 7.♗xc4 ♗b4 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘h4



Upon browsing through Diego Flores's games, I noticed his fondness for this knight move. His results as White were impressive with the 9...♘bd7 and 9...♗g6 lines. I did not see a game of his with Black's next move, which prompted me to play it.

9...♗g4 10.f3 ♗h5 11.g4 ♘d5 12.♘g2 Another interesting way to proceed here is with 12.♕e1 ♗e7 13.♘g2 ♗g6, when White has a slim plus in the middlegame.

12...♗g6 13.♘a2 ♗e7 14.e4 ♘b6 15.♗b3



15...a5 If Black refrains from occupying the a5-square, White will grab his chance as shown after 15...c5 16.a5 ♘c8 17.d5 ♕xa5 18.dxe6 ♘c6 19.♗e3 ♘b6 20.♗d2 ♕b5 21.♘c3 ♕d3 22.♔h1, and White is slightly better.

The alternative 15...♘a6 16.a5 ♘d7 17.♗e3 h6 18.♘c3 e5 19.d5 ♗c5 20.♕d2 also favours White.

16.♗e3 c5!?

Sacrificing a pawn for active play. I was surprised to find out, after checking various game sources, that Black's last move had never been played before.

The most common move here is 16...♘8d7, which in tournament practice has greatly favoured White, both after 17.♕e2, 17.♖ac1 and 17.♘c3.

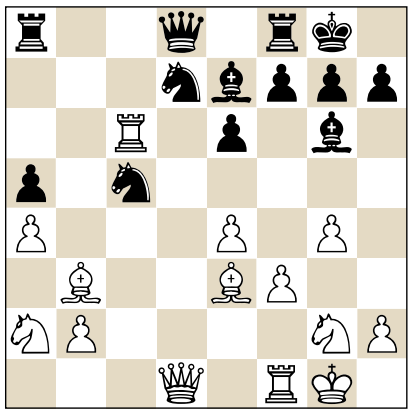
17.dxc5 ♘6d7 18.♖c1 ♘a6 19.c6

Other white moves will allow Black to regain the sacrificed pawn and equalize.

For example: 19.♗c4 ♗xc5 20.♗xa6 ♗xe3+ 21.♘xe3 bxa6 22.♕d4 ♕b6 23.♕xb6 ♘xb6 24.♘c3 ♖ab8, with a draw in sight.

While also after 19.♕e2 ♗xc5 20.♖fd1 ♕e7 Black is fine.

19...bxc6 20.♖xc6 ♘ac5



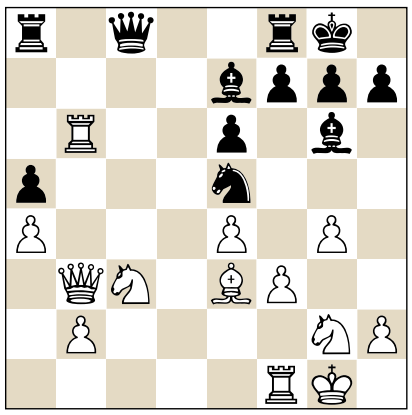
21.♘c3

The most logical continuation. Keeping the bishop with 21.♗c4 will permit 21...♘e5, and after 22.♖xc5 (or 22.♕xd8 ♖fxd8 23.♗xc5 ♘xc6 24.♗xe7 ♘xe7, when Black also has the upper hand) 22...♗xc5 23.♗xc5 ♕xd1 24.♖xd1 ♖fc8 Black is better.

21...♘xb3 22.♕xb3 ♘e5 23.♖b6 ♕c8

Other routes may be considered in this unexplored position, e.g. 23...♖c8 24.♖b5 f6 25.♗b6 ♕d6 26.f4 ♘c4 27.♖d1 ♕c6 28.♘e3 ♘xe3 29.♗xe3 ♗b4 30.♖b6 ♕a8 31.f5 ♗xc3 32.bxc3 ♕xe4 33.♕xe6+ ♕xe6 34.♖xe6 ♗f7, and in this particular set-up, a draw is in the air due to the opposite-coloured bishops.

Also playable is 23...♖b8 24.♖b5 h5 25.h3 hxg4 26.hxg4 ♗d6 27.♗f4 ♕c7 28.♖xb8 ♕xb8 29.♕xb8 ♗xb8 30.♘b5 ♘d3 31.♗xb8 ♖xb8, and Black will hold again.

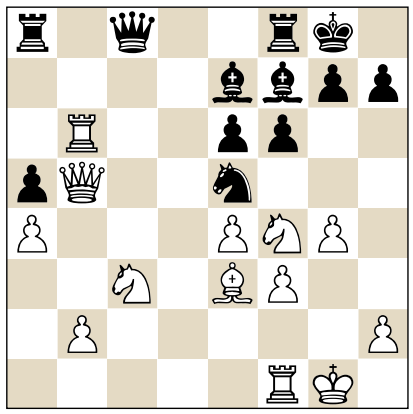


24.♕b5?!

White's last move is dubious. It forces Black to protect the knight with a pawn move, simultaneously activating his light-squared bishop. The best try was 24.♘e2, and now, for instance, 24...♗b4 (also playable is 24...♕c4) 25.♗d4 ♖d8 26.♖xb4 axb4 27.♗xe5 ♕c5+ 28.♗d4 ♖xd4 29.♘xd4 ♕xd4+ 30.♖f2 h5, and the chances should be about equal.

24...f6 25.♘f4 ♗e8 26.♕b3 ♗f7 27.♕b5

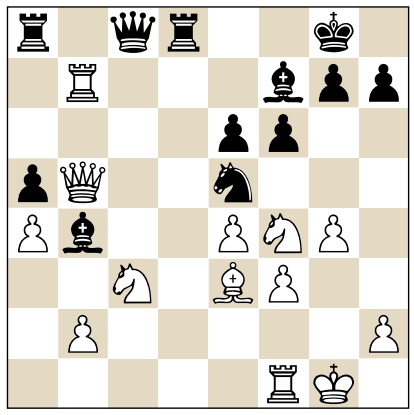
A non-verbal draw offer by repeating moves.



27...♖d8 Recommended here was 27...g5 28.♘g2 ♗b4 29.♘a2 ♗e8 30.♕e2 ♕c4 31.♕xc4 ♘xc4 32.♘xb4 ♘xb6 33.♗xb6 axb4 34.a5 ♗b5, and Black is better.

There was not much to gain with 27...♕c4 28.♖b7 ♗b4 29.♕xc4 ♘xc4 30.♗c1 ♖fd8 31.♔g2 ♖ac8 etc. Unless I got an obvious endgame advantage, I wanted the queens to remain on the board.

28.♖b7 ♗b4



29.♖c1 Although time-pressure was creeping in on both sides, White managed to find his best chance here. Alternatives like 29.♘a2 ♗d2 30.♗xd2 ♖xd2 31.♖f2 g5 would yield Black an almost decisive attack.

Or 29.♘b1 ♗e8 30.♕b6 ♘c4 31.♕xe6+ ♕xe6 32.♘xe6 ♘xe3 33.♘xd8 ♘xf1 34.♘e6 ♗f7 35.♘c7 ♖d8 36.♔xf1 ♖d1+ drags White to the verge of capitulation.

29...♘xf3+

Both of us were alarmingly short of time. If I had been less in a hurry, I

NEW IN CHESS

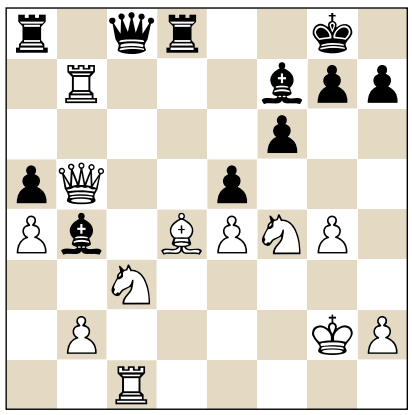
Forty-six years after his Olympiad debut Eugene Torre had not come to Baku just to participate. The Filipino GM was in great shape and won bronze on Board 3 with a 2836(!) TPR.

am almost sure I would have gone for the less complicated 29...♗e8 30.♕b6 ♖d6 31.♕c7 ♖d7 32.♕xc8 ♖xc8 33.♖xd7 ♗xd7 34.♘a2 ♖xc1+ 35.♗xc1 ♗e7, with a clear endgame advantage.

30.♔g2 ♘d4 Keeping the queens on the board will favour the side with more time on his clock, and I had more minutes here.

Again, 30...♗e8 31.♕b6 ♖d6 32.♕c7 ♕xc7 33.♖xc7 ♘e5 34.♘b5 ♖c6 offers Black a favourable endgame, but his winning chances have greatly diminished.

31.♗xd4 e5



32.♖xf7?? This loses immediately. I suspect Diego intended to harass my king via the a2-g8 diagonal, but it was a mirage. Despite the 30-second increment format we are enjoying these days, White succumbed to time-pressure. The young players of today should appreciate the fact that digital clocks with increments are now used instead of mechanical clocks sans increments.

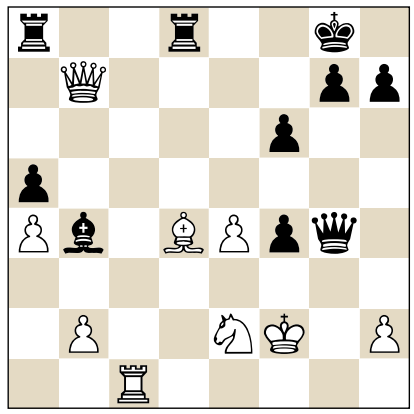
In the past, I experienced heart-breaking losses due to extreme time-pressure. The most momentous one was the 5th game in my 1983 Candidates Quarter-final Match against Zoltan Ribli. After four draws, the pressure was building up, and while looking for the best moves in the middlegame, I erroneously disregarded the practical side of the game and got into severe time-trouble: a few minutes left with 15 more moves to play! I don't have Viktor Kortchnoi's gift, and minor and major mistakes followed each other. That agonizing defeat was the main reason I eventually lost our 10-game match. In the mechanical clock era I sometimes benefited from time-scramble fights, but those games had fewer consequence.

Going back to the game, I had failed to consider the move 32.♔f3 and the ensuing line 32...h5 33.h3 hxg4+ 34.hxg4 ♗e8 35.♕b6 ♖d6 36.♕c7 ♕xc7 37.♖xc7 ♖xd4 38.♘e6 ♖d3+ 39.♔e2 ♖d7 40.♘d5 ♖a6, and equality is the fairest result. In my conversations with Bobby Fischer, who was the inventor of FIDE's present official time-control for major events (adopted first by Bobby himself in his well publicized and tension-filled 1992 rematch with Boris Spassky), he told me he favoured a 60-second increment per move, especially for World Championships, and did not mind reducing the starting time allocation.

32...♔xf7 33.♘ce2

The idea 33.♔f3 exf4 34.♘e2 ♕d7 35.♕c4+ ♔f8 is no longer viable here.

33...♕xg4+ 34.♔f2 exf4 35.♕b7+ ♔g8



36.♗xf6

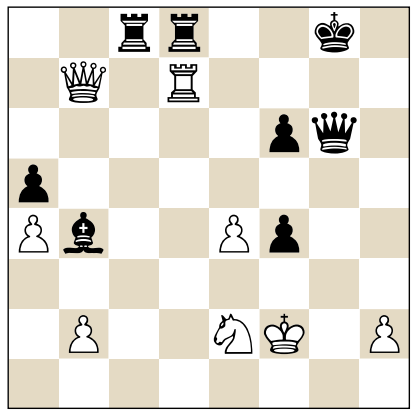
Also 36.♖g1 ♕h4+ 37.♔g2 ♖ab8 38.♕c6 ♔h8 is hopeless.

36...gxf6 37.♖c7 ♖ac8

Short of time and wanting to simplify the position, I missed mate in six via 37...♕h4+ 38.♔g2 f3+ 39.♔xf3 ♖d3+ 40.♔g2 ♕h3+ 41.♔g1 ♖d1+ 42.♔f2 ♖f1 mate.

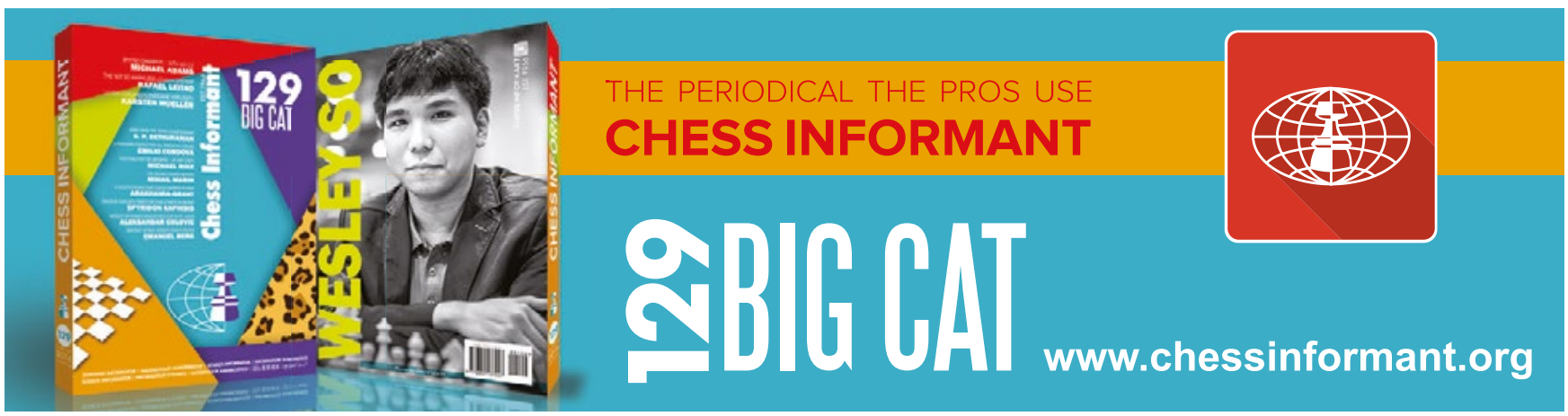
38.♖xh7 ♗c5+ 39.♔e1 ♗b4+ 40.♔f2 The common way to gain time and advance to the next time-control.

40...♕g6 41.♖d7



41...♕g5 Preventing 42.♕d5+.

42.e5 ♕h4+ And in view of the pending double attack on the king and the rook, White resigned. ■

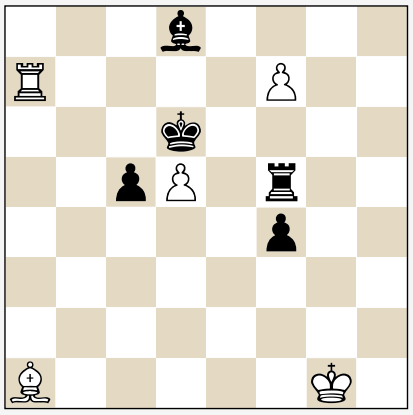


MAXIMize your Tactics

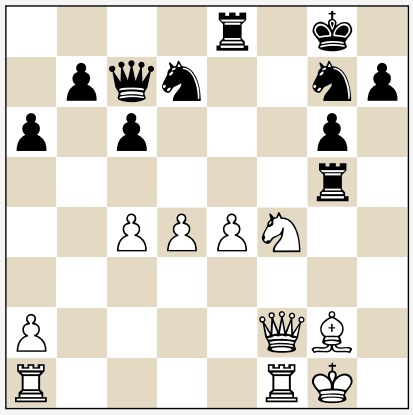
with Maxim Notkin

Find the best move in the positions below

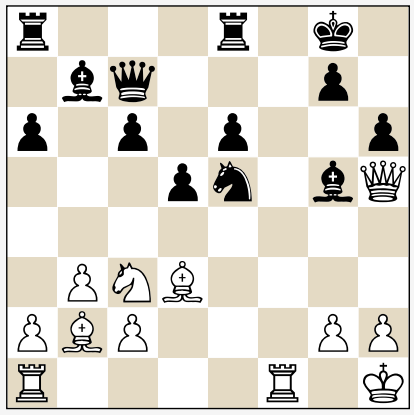
Solutions on page 105



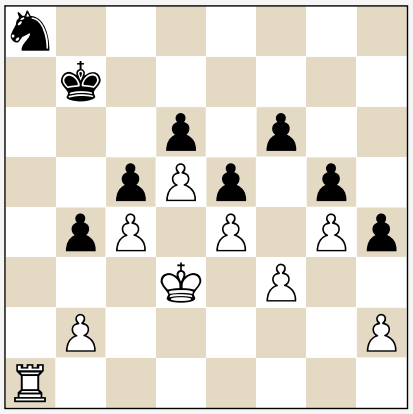
1. White to play



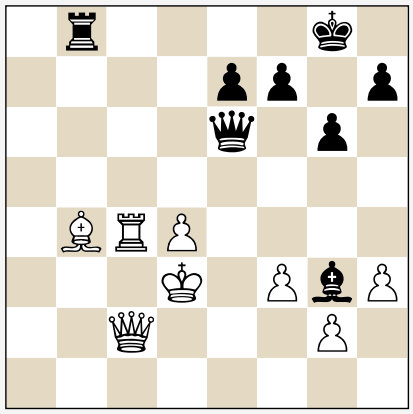
2. White to play



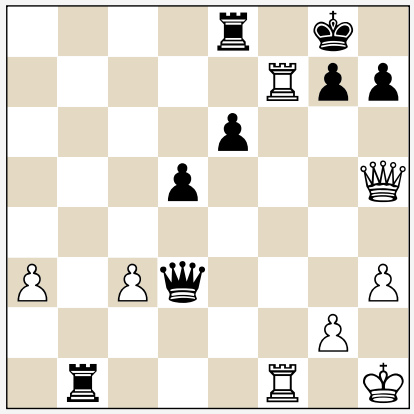
3. White to play



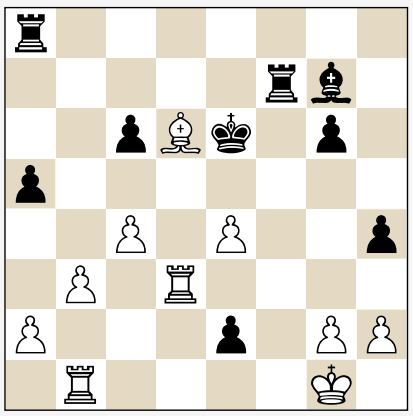
4. White to play



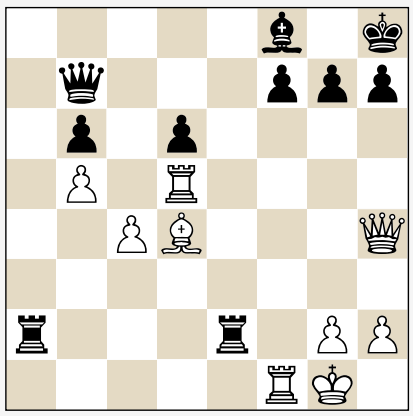
5. Black to play



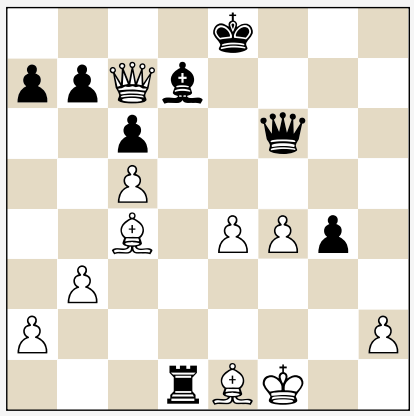
6. White to play



7. Black to play



8. White to play



9. Black to play

United Stars of America

Team USA writes history at Baku Olympiad

They may not have been the most close-knit team to ever win the Olympiad, but Team USA did boast three of the best players on the planet and did share a fervent wish to win gold. With a record score of 20 match points the Americans edged out Ukraine by the tiniest of margins. **ALEJANDRO RAMIREZ** watched in admiration and amazement how a thoroughly individualistic team remained focused on one goal.

For a long time, I assumed, perhaps more romantically and naively than anything else, that there was some sort of team chemistry that shone during the Olympiad, a unique event in which players are not only representing themselves, but also their country. Just think of the Armenian team that always performs way better than their average ratings and has won three of the five last Olympiads. Or the fascinating team spirit in the Chinese squad that was victorious two years ago in Tromsø. Often, players are boosted by an immense amount of pride that is not present in other events, and perhaps even a certain encouragement to bring their A-game. It is hard enough to lose a game, but to disappoint your teammates and your country is a much bigger blow.

Prior to the Olympiad in Baku, I raised my concern about the lack of team chemistry in the American team to Fabiano Caruana, especially the fact that with three of the top-10 players on the team, they were used to over-the-board rivalry rather than comradery. Team USA had no joint team meetings, no training sessions, and I wasn't even sure if they were all friends on Facebook. Fabi kind of

MARIA EMELIANOVA

They did it! Team USA has won the Hamilton Russell Cup. Left to right: coach Aleksandr Lenderman, Hikaru Nakamura, team captain John Donaldson, Sam Shankland, Ray Robson, Wesley So and Fabiano Caruana.

looked at me, and basically said, 'Yes, yes, but we have really, really good players...'

Hard to beat that logic.

After all, the team that the USA sent to Azerbaijan had been talked about for years. The accusations against the U.S. Federation, or sometimes more explicitly against the Saint Louis Chess Club and Rex Sinquefield for 'buying nerds', had spread throughout the chess world in what I always felt was a rather unfair point of view. America, before the Baku Olympiad, has had a long history of fielding players born overseas; it went as far as jokes of America being Russia-B or USSR-B in certain Olympiads, since many of the older players had immigrated from the former Soviet Union. In this year's team, consisting of Fabiano Caruana, Hikaru Nakamura, Wesley So, Sam Shankland and Ray Robson, the U.S. fielded a team that had 4/5 players born as U.S. Citizens, and 5/5 players living in America. The only language they have in common is English, and actually that is the only language that some of the players in the team speak.

The selection for the American coach was simple: the players voted on who they wanted from a long list of names. With every single player voting for a different coach, a second round of voting was held, which was marginally won by Aleksandr Lenderman, a strong grandmaster that had successfully represented America in the previous World Team Championship. John Donaldson, an IM and renowned chess historian, has been the Olympic team captain for many years, and the USCF saw no reason to change that. As usual, Donaldson took charge of logistical things while taking care of any potential headaches for the players. The only other 'members' of the Open delegation

were Hikaru's second, Kris Littlejohn, and Wesley's mother, Lotis Key. Fabiano's second, Rustam Kasimdzhanov, was tied up playing Board 1 for Uzbekistan. The players, of course, all arrived on different dates and on different flights.

Once in Baku, things proceeded pretty much as expected. The players came to do their job, and they did it tremendously well. True, they didn't take team walks, or share analysis. The team meetings lasted less than 10 minutes, with the toss up question of whether Ray or Sam would play on Board 4 the next day. However, this didn't prevent them from showing a level of pride and excellence over the board that equalled every other team.

'The players, of course, all arrived on different dates and on different flights.'

The Americans started off with two convincing victories against Andorra and Scotland, but somehow their Round 3 against Argentina was already complicated. Nakamura found himself in a lost position, while Caruana's game against Fernando Peralta was very unclear almost until the end. America took it 3-1 after Hikaru saved his position miraculously and Fabi pushed his win through, but it wasn't the cleanest of matches. A draw against the Czech Republic, a team that America outrated on every single board, perhaps only served to fuel the fire in the American spirits.

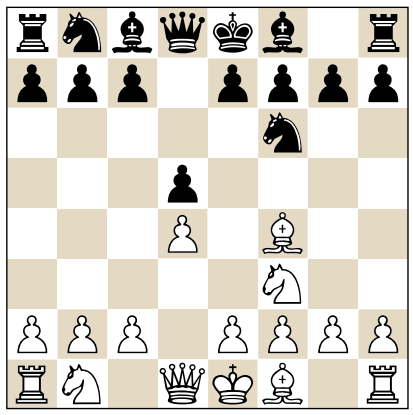
In their match against Serbia, America came out guns blazing. Hikaru demolished Robert Markus, while Wesley beat Nikola Sedlak in the following game.

NOTES BY
Wesley So

Nikola Sedlak
Wesley So
Baku 2016 (5)
Queen's Bishop, London System

Being selected to play for the USA in the 42nd Olympiad was a dream come true. At first, all I hoped for was to represent well. But once I had arrived in Baku, I had a new dream: to win a Gold Medal. From a distance that kind of dream seems pretty wild, a hope you keep in your heart but don't talk about. I just privately tried to settle myself, prepare well and do my best. Here is my game against talented Serbian GM Nikola Sedlak from Round 5. Not only is it important to win with Black in a team event, but I think this game is one of my nicest this year. The day before, I missed a win against GM Hracek of the Czech Republic (39.♔h1!) and our match with them ended in a disappointing 2-2 tie. It hurt. For this game I wanted to bounce back strong and make sure not to miss any chances again.

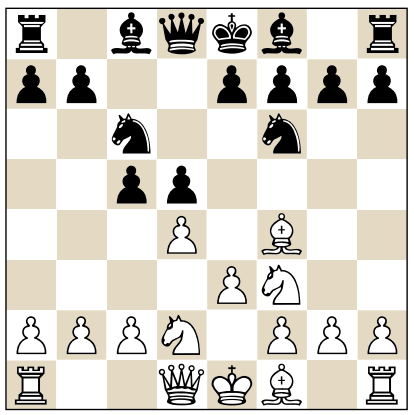
1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.♗f4



I knew that Sedlak has played the London before and he has a lot of games with it, but I didn't realize that he had also written a book on this opening! It all turned out well in the end, as I might have chosen a different opening if I'd known this beforehand. The London has been popular recently thanks to the efforts of ex-world champ GM Kramnik. The idea is to be able to use your analysis at an early stage of the game. 3.♗g5 is another favourite weapon of Kramnik's, which he used four times this year. Be very careful of Big Vlad when he is White! He scored 4 out of 4 in the Olympiad and is especially effective with the white pieces.

3...c5 4.e3 ♘c6 5.♘bd2

This is supposed to be the most accurate move order here, as 5.c3 might allow 5...♕b6.

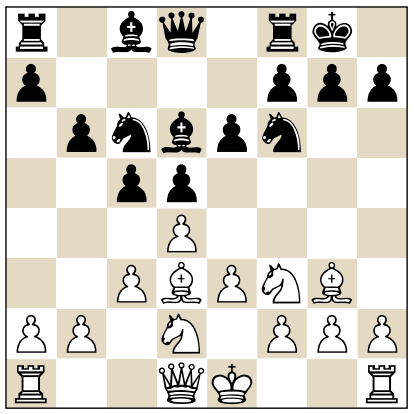


5...e6 Now if 5...♕b6 White goes 6.dxc5 ♕xb2 (6...♕xc5 7.c4) 7.♖b1 ♕c3 8.♗b5, getting a dangerous-looking initiative.

6.c3 6.♗b5 is a possible alternative, with the idea of going c2-c4 in one go.

6...♗d6 6...cxd4 7.exd4 ♘h5, as played by Kryvoruchko earlier this year, is a good alternative. The idea is to kick White's bishop away from the active h2-b8 diagonal. His game continued 8.♗e3 ♗d6 9.♘e5 g6, with decent counterplay based on ...f7-f6.

7.♗g3 0-0 8.♗d3 b6

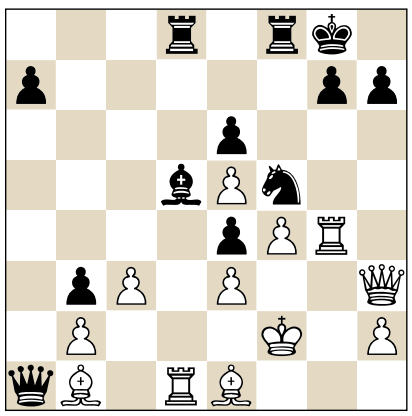


This has become pretty much the main line against the London Opening. It's logical, since Black finishes his development very quickly

and White has many possibilities, but so far no sign of an advantage.

9.♕e2

9.♘e5 ♗b7 10.f4 is another way to proceed. But White recently suffered a setback thanks to composed play by super-GM Michael Adams: 10...♘e7 11.♕f3 (11.♕b1 g6) 11...♘f5 12.♗f2 ♗e7 13.g4 ♘d6 14.g5 ♘fe4 15.0-0-0 (15.♖g1 is a tricky option, when almost any black move is good, except 15...♘xd2?: 16.♗xh7+! ♔xh7 17.♕h5+ ♔g8 18.♖g3! ♘f5 19.♖h3 ♘f3+ 20.♘xf3 f6 21.0-0-0, with an almost decisive attack for White) 15...c4 16.♗c2 b5 17.♕h3 b4! 18.♘xe4 dxe4 19.♗e1 ♗d5 20.♖g1 b3 21.axb3 cxb3 22.♗b1 f5 23.gxf6 ♗xf6 24.♖g4 ♘f5 25.♔d2 ♕a5 26.♔e2 ♗xe5 27.dxe5 ♖ad8 28.♔f2 ♕a1



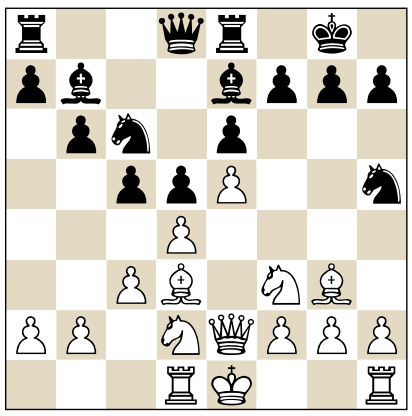
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

The poor white bishops! Black won in a few more moves in Karjakin-Adams, Wijk aan Zee 2016.

9...♗b7 10.♖d1 ♖e8

Later I realized that 10...♖c8 is more accurate, since if White continues as in the game, the opening of the c-file will be important.

11.e4 ♗e7 12.e5 ♘h5 My rook now looks kind of silly on e8.



NEW IN CHESS

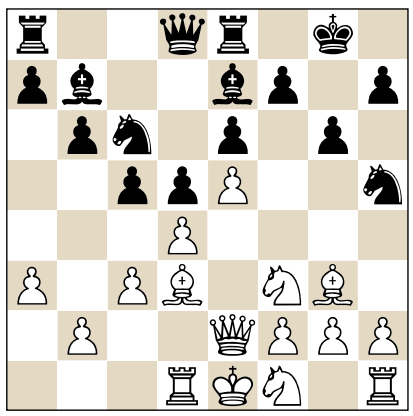
Wesley So: 'Once I had arrived in Baku, I had a new dream: to win a Gold Medal. From a distance that kind of dream seems pretty wild, a hope you keep in your heart but don't talk about.'

13.a3

13.h4! looks very dangerous to me and is what I would prefer if I was White. After 13...♘xg3 14.fxg3 White is threatening both ♗xh7+ and ♘g5, so Black has to be very careful about his reply. According to the comp, 14...♖f8 is the best defence, but it looks too deep for me.

13...g6 14.♘f1

14.♕e3 is slightly stronger to control the d4 and f4-squares. For example, after 14...f5 15.exf6 ♗xf6 16.♗e5 White has a grip on the e5 outpost: 16...♘xe5 17.♘xe5 ♗g5 18.♕f3.

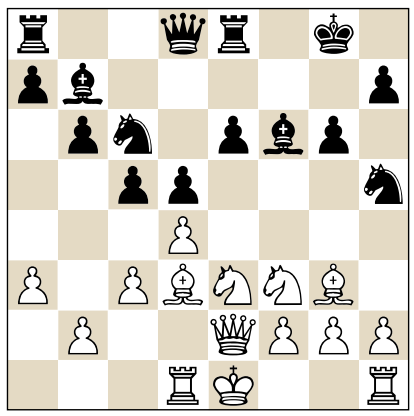


14...f5

14...c4?! is a clear strategic mistake, as it will be hard for the black king to survive the kingside onslaught with the centre closed. What happened next was Gata Kamsky playing 'a la Fischer': 15.♗b1 b5 16.♘e3 a5 17.♘g4 b4 18.♕e3 bxc3 19.bxc3 ♖b8 20.♗f4 ♗c8 21.♗g5 ♖b3 22.h4 ♕b6 23.♗c2 ♖xa3 24.♗xe7 ♘xe7 25.♕h6 ♘f5 26.♗xf5 exf5 27.♘g5 ♘f6 28.♘e3, and White was winning in Kamsky-Goganov, Moscow 2016.

To make myself clear, I was referring to the famous games Fischer-Myagmarsuren, 1967, and Fischer-Panno, 1970, which were both won by the American. I grew up analysing these games.

15.exf6 ♗xf6 16.♘e3



16...e5

Apparently, this line had been played two months earlier, so I suppose I got

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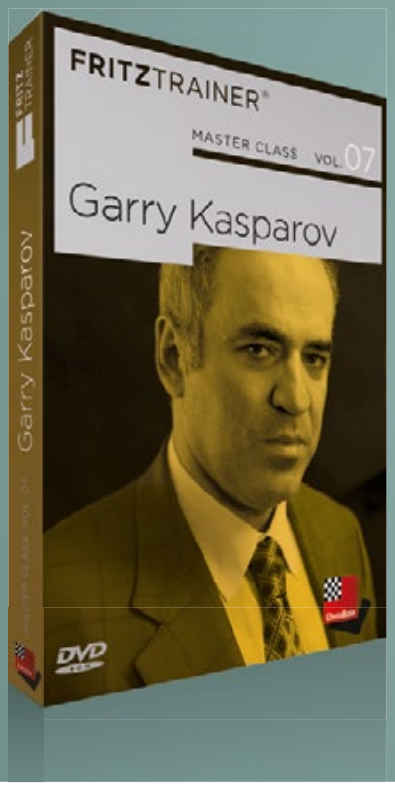

MASTER CLASS VOL.07

GARRY KASPAROV

Was there ever in the history of chess a better player than Garry Kasparov? Many chess fans will answer in the negative. His career in chess is the story of incredibly high-powered performance.

Garry Kasparov's talent was recognised at an early age, but it was at the latest at the age of only 15 when he qualified for the renowned USSR national championship that he was also considered by the chess world as a whole as a possible future champion. But on the way to the throne of world champion Kasparov had to overcome numerous obstacles. Kasparov felt that he was being held back by the Karpov-friendly Soviet federation and by FIDE. He finally broke through and at the age of 22 became the youngest ever world champion. He also conducted his struggle at the board above all and enriched chess with his incredibly dynamic playing style as well as his scientific preparation for games.

Kasparov was far ahead of his time in his employment of the new electronic aids: computers and database programs such as ChessBase. His numerous encounters with the pragmatic Karpov saw the collision of two quite different playing styles, styles in which these two players were far and away the best in the world. In addition to these matches, Kasparov also contested many tournaments and always appeared with the same mind-set: win games and tournaments!

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caught in Nikola's home cooking, as I was already 'out of book'. After 16...cxd4 17.cxd4 ♘xg3 18.hxg3 e5 19.dxe5 ♘xe5 20.♘xe5 (20.♗e4 ♘c4; 20.♗b5 ♖e7) 20...♖xe5 21.0-0 ♕e7 Black had absolutely no problems in Artemiev-Sevian, Martuni 2016.

17.dxe5 ♘xe5 18.♘xe5

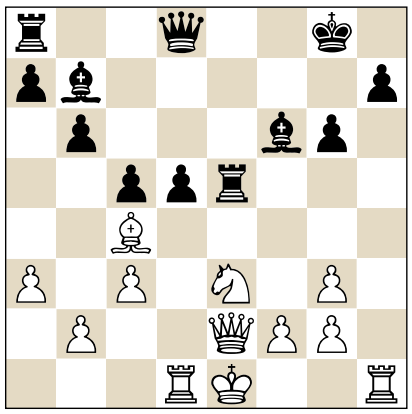
The position is equal after 18.♗e4 ♘c4 19.♕xc4 ♖xe4 20.♕xe4 dxe4 21.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 22.♘d2 ♔f7.

18...♘xg3

It is important for a black rook to be on e5, as after, say, 18...♗xe5 19.♗c4 there would be problems defending the d5-pawn.

19.hxg3 ♖xe5 20.♗c4

Pinning my d5-pawn and threatening to eliminate it with the help of his rook on the d-file.



20...b5!

A strong pawn sac! I am diverting away his bishop from important matters on the d-file.

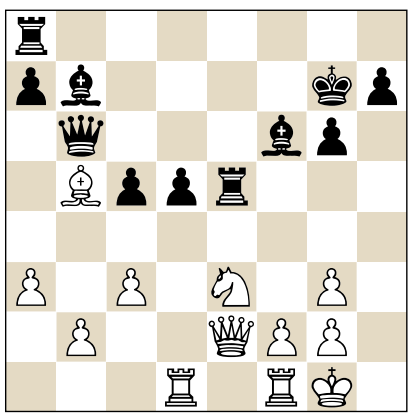
20...♔g7 21.♕f3 is not as clear.

21.♗xb5 ♕b6

After 21...d4 White plays 22.0-0.

22.0-0 ♔g7

22...d4 is always met by 23.♕c4+ ♔g7 24.♘g4, which is why I took my king to a safer spot first.



23.♗d3!

A good defence. I don't win a piece, yet it seems that ...d4 will always be met by ♘c4.

23.b4? cxb4 (23...d4 24.a4) 24.axb4 d4 25.♖xd4 ♕xb5 wins a piece.

23...♗g5

Even after my energetic play I cannot lay claim to an advantage, since White is a pawn up. So I decided to continue normally and develop the rest of my pieces.

23...d4 doesn't yield Black anything after 24.cxd4 cxd4 25.♘c4 ♕c6 26.♕f3 ♕xf3 27.gxf3 .

24.c4

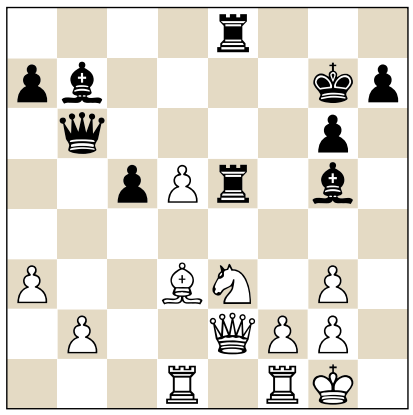
Both 24.♘c4 dxc4 25.♕xe5+ ♗f6 26.♕f4 cxd3 27.♖xd3 ♕c6 28.f3 ♖e8 and 24.♕g4 h5 are good for Black.

24...♖ae8

24...♖f8? cannot be played because of 25.f4.

25.cxd5

25.♕g4 is met by 25...h5.



25...♖xe3!

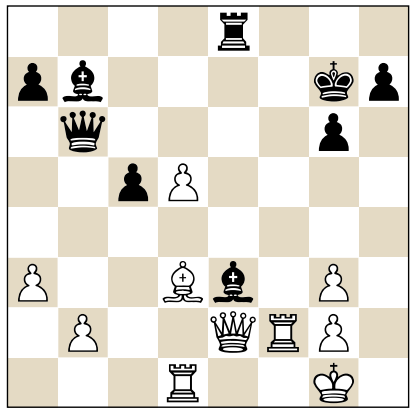
A perfect exchange sacrifice. The computer does not get it at first, but this is a very good try.

26.fxe3 ♗xe3+ 27.♖f2?

A step in the wrong direction.

27.♔h1 ♖e5 28.g4 ♗xd5 is bad for White, since there are always mating threats like ...g5 or ...♕d8-h4.

But White has 27.♔h2! ♖e5, and now 28.♗e4!! (28.g4 g5 29.♕f3 ♗f4+, and Black wins) 28...♖h5+ 29.♕xh5 gxh5 30.♖f3 gives White chances to save himself. His king is now safe and Black's king is very vulnerable after an eventual ♖df1. A draw looks like the most logical outcome here.



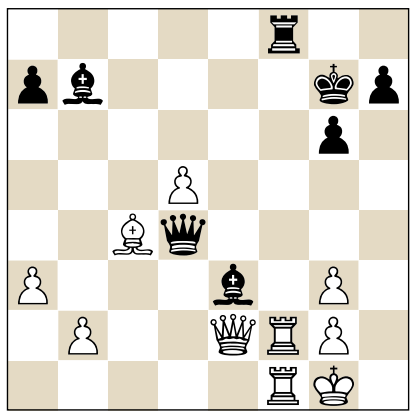
27...c4!

After having used up most of my time I struck on the right idea. This is the only way for Black to try and win.

Neither 27...♗xd5 28.♗xg6 ♕xg6 29.♖xd5 ♕xg3 30.♖d7+ ♔g8, nor 27...♖e5 28.♗c4 ♗d4 29.♕c2 ♗xd5 30.♗xd5 ♖xd5 31.♔f1 ♖h5, nor 27...♕d6 28.♗c4 ♕xg3 29.♕f3 ♕xf3 30.gxf3 would yield me anything.

28.♗xc4 ♖f8 29.♖df1 ♕d4!

White is an exchange and two pawns up, but all his pieces are pinned. He is doomed.



30.b3?

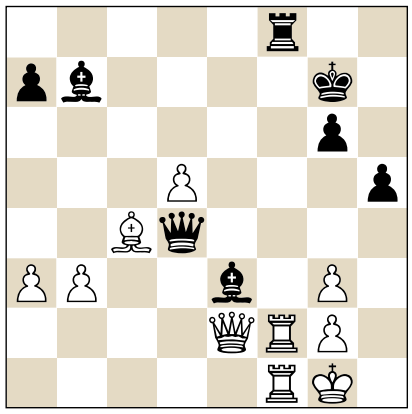
White's last chance was 30.d6 ♗c6 (30...h5 31.d7) 31.b4 ♖xf2 32.♖xf2 ♗xf2+ 33.♕xf2 ♕xc4 34.♕xa7+ ♕f7, when White has many pawns for the piece. But none of his pawns can move right now and it will take a while rounding them up.

White loses after 30.g4 ♖xf2 31.♖xf2 ♗xf2+ 32.♕xf2 ♕xc4 33.♕xa7 ♕xd5.

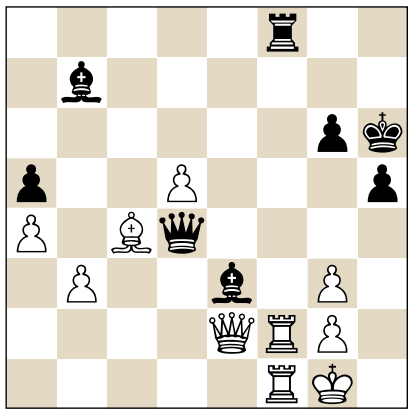
30...h5!

Black is simply winning by force here. It will take a long time for any computer to realize this. After the

game I did a little test on a super-computer and it gave -3.05 after reaching Depth 42, saying that White's best defence is 31.b4.



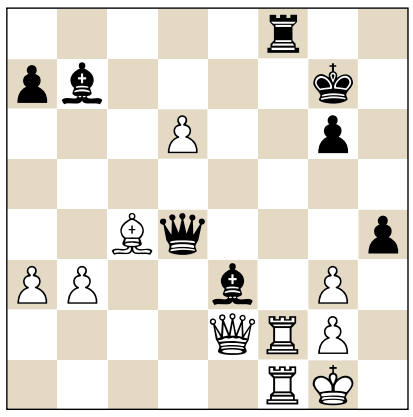
31.d6 This loses at once, but White has no defence anyway. Basically White can either lose immediately or wait to lose in the end.
Here are some lines to show you how Black will win in case White waits:
A) 31.a4 a5 32.♕e1 ♔h6 33.♕e2



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and now Black can choose:
A1) 33...♔g5! (the king attacks!) 34.d6 h4 35.gxh4+ ♔xh4 36.d7 (36.♔h2 ♕e5+ 37.♔h1 ♖h8, and it is mate in six) 36...♔g3!. Mission accomplished! It is mate in 9, according to the comp.
A2) 33...♖f5 34.♕e1 (34.♗d3 ♖f6 35.♗c4) 34...h4! 35.gxh4 ♕f4 36.♕e2 ♕g3 37.♕e1 ♖f4 38.h5 ♖h4 39.hxg6 ♕h2 mate.
B) Or 31.♕e1 ♔h6 32.d6 h4 33.gxh4 ♕e4 34.♔h2 ♕xh4+ 35.♔g1 ♕g3, and wins.
C) Or 31.b4 ♖f6 32.b5 ♖xf2 33.♖xf2 ♗xf2+ 34.♕xf2 ♕xc4 35.d6 ♕d5, and White is simply a piece down.

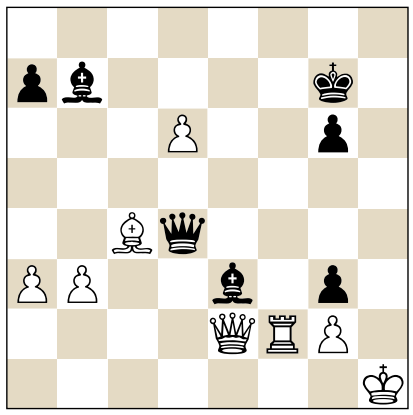
31...h4



32.♔h1
The alternatives are no better: 32.g4 ♗e4 33.d7 h3 34.gxh3 ♖f3 35.d8♕ ♕xd8. What a position!
Or 32.gxh4 ♕e4 33.♔h1 ♕xh4+ 34.♔g1 ♕g3, and mate on g2 on the next move.

32...♖xf2
32...hxg3 is fine as well.

33.♖xf2 hxg3



34.♖f7+
Black also wins after 34.♕b2 gxf2 35.♕xd4+ ♗xd4 36.d7 ♗b6 .

34...♔h6
And since White cannot avoid mate sooner or later (for instance 35.♗e6 ♕h4+ 36.♗h3 ♕xh3 mate), Sedlak resigned.
This is my most beautiful game yet of the year, and it is so deep that even computers do not realize that the exchange sacrifice on move 25 leads to a black advantage. This is also a perfect example of how my Olympiad games in 2016 usually went: a slow and unpretentious start, followed by a tactical skirmish and a quick finish. Most of my games finished even before move 40. And it was also hard to explain why, but I performed far better as Black(5/5) than as White (3½/5)! This might be a good sign. If I can improve my White games, I can make the step up to a new level.

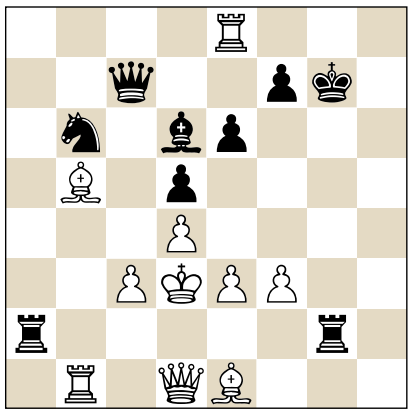
■ ■ ■

Even though in that same match Caruana was in trouble against Ivanisevic, his opponent missed a win that wouldn't have changed the result of the match. After that came a key match: the powerhouse of Ukraine. Despite missing Ivanchuk, Ukraine more than made up for it in this Olympiad with an exceedingly brilliant performance by Andrei Volokitin. The bottom three boards drew, leaving Fabiano with the white pieces in an unclear position against Pavel Eljanov. Fabi was the hero of the round, defeating the Ukrainian by exploiting the power of his passed a-pawn. This was the only match that Ukraine did not win, but more on that later.

The biggest match scare in the Olympiad, even though the final result doesn't show it, was probably against India. At some point, Nakamura was certainly winning his game, So had chances to convert, but Caruana was against the wall against Harikrishna, and Shankland was totally lost against Sethuraman. I've always believed that the tournament winner needs a little bit of luck, and it is interesting that if Sam had lost this game, USA would not have taken gold, as I will explain later.

Best performance Board 3

			pts	gms	TPR
1 Wesley So	USA	2782	8½	10	2896
2 Zoltan Almasi	HUN	2684	7½	9	2845
3 Eugene Torre	PHI	2447	10	11	2836
4 Laurent Fressinet	FRA	2664	7	8	2809
5 Ian Nepomniachtchi	RUS	2740	8	10	2804
6 Indjic Aleksandar	SRB	2548	8½	10	2786
7 Vidit Santosh Gujrathi	IND	2669	8	11	2786
8 Rauf Mamedov	AZE	2666	6	8	2783
9 Anton Korobov	UKR	2675	7	9	2771
10 Tamir Nabaty	ISR	2630	8½	10	2757



Shankland-Sethuraman
Baku 2016 (7)
position after 29...♔g7

NEW IN CHESS

The crazy game that Sam Shankland won in the match against India not only saw one of the most improbable escapes ever on grandmaster level, but also proved to be a key game in the American team's quest for gold.

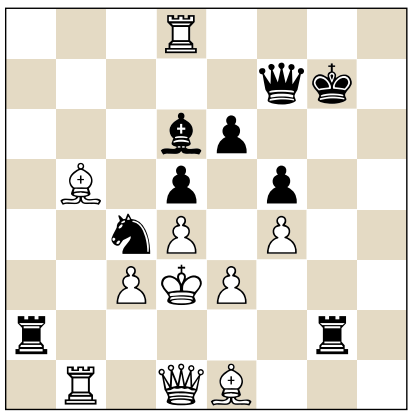
30.f4 At first glance this is a wildly complicated position, with both sides under attack. At second glance you realize that White has basically no threats and is getting mated.

30...f5? 30...♘c4 was the easiest win. The threat is simply ...♖ab2, and White has no moves: 31.♕h5 (31.♗xc4 ♕xc4 mate; 31.♖b3 ♖ab2, while 31.f5 exf5 doesn't actually help White in any way) 31...♖ad2+, and mate.

31.♕b3 Sethuraman still had enough time to find a way to checkmate his opponent, but things start slipping away from his control. A journalist asked Shankland if he would have resigned if this hadn't been a team event, and it was written somewhere that he played on in order not to let the team down. Sam clarified that he would have played on no matter what. Black will still have to finish him off, after all.

31...♕f7?! 31...♖h2 is a computer move that wins, but I won't bore you with the magnificent point behind it. You can ask your engine.

32.♕d1 ♘c4 33.♖d8



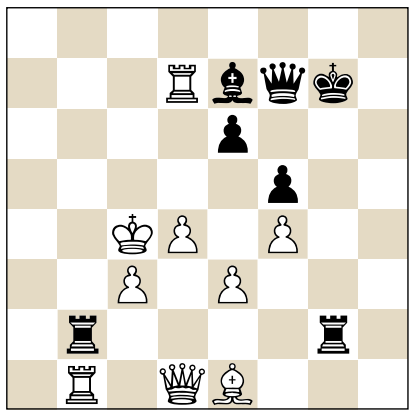
33...♗e7?! 33...♘xe3 34.♔xe3 ♗xf4+ 35.♔xf4 ♖g4+ 36.♔e3 f4+ 37.♔f3 ♖g3+ 38.♗xg3 ♕h5+ 39.♔xf4 ♕f5+ is not the most obvious mate with the seconds ticking down.

34.♖d7 ♖ab2?

This move is a bit crazy, though. Black allows the exchange of his knight for no discernible reason.

34...♘d6, and Black is still winning, though not as clearly.

35.♗xc4 dxc4+ 36.♔xc4

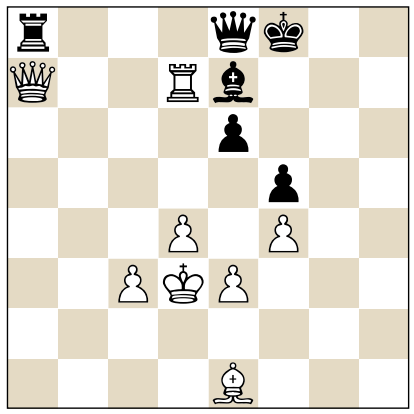


36...♕e8?! 36...e5+ 37.d5 ♕e8 is probably a perpetual.

37.♖xb2 ♖xb2 38.♕a1

Suddenly, Black's attack has faltered somewhat, and White can cherish hope to convert his two-pawn advantage.

38...♖b8 39.♕a7 ♔f8 40.♔d3 ♖a8



With the time-control reached, it is clear that White is winning. Shankland eventually converted a game that would be crucial to the final tiebreaks.

Baku 2016 – USA

			pts	gms	TPR
1	Fabiano Caruana	2808	7	10	2838
2	Hikaru Nakamura	2789	7½	11	2762
3	Wesley So	2782	8½	10	2896
4	Sam Shankland	2679	5½	8	2661
5	Ray Robson	2674	3	5	2585

Of course, now playing on Board 1, USA was bound to play Russia. Unfortunately for the Americans, their biggest weakness showed clearly in this match. Robson, despite being a strong grandmaster, is not quite at the level of Alexander Grischuk yet. In a crucial mistake, he dragged the game on longer than he should have instead of trying to seal a quick draw. Grischuk outplayed the American and won with Black on Board 4. Somewhat understandably, Ray did not play again after this game. However, this time it was Wesley that stepped up to the plate, and was not only the saviour of the American team against the Russians, but also overtook his rival, Ian Nepomniachtchi, as the top third board in the competition, earning him the individual gold medal at the end.

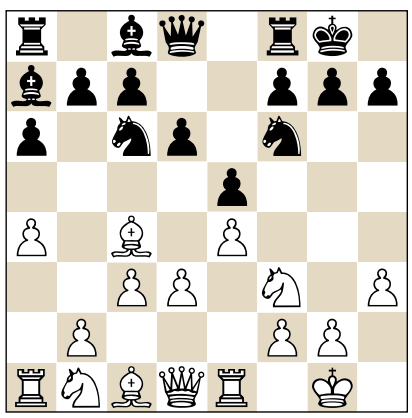
Ian Nepomniachtchi
Wesley So
Baku 2016 (8)
Italian Game, Giuoco Piano

At this point Nepomniachtchi still had a perfect score, having won all his seven games.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.0-0 ♘f6 5.d3 0-0 6.a4

The popularity of the a4 Italians seems to have spawned from desperation: what to play against the Berlin? At the very least, it brings some fresh air to 1.e4 e5, and Nepo has used it with quite some success.

6...d6 7.c3 a6 8.h3 ♗a7 9.♖e1



9...♘e7

9...♗e6 was Zhigalko's choice against Giri only a few days earlier in the Netherlands-Belarus match. Overall, the line doesn't have very many games.

10.d4 ♘g6 11.♗d3

The bishop returns to defend the central pawn and help establish the pawn centre. Kramnik also played it against Aronian, and if Vlad plays it, it's a good move.

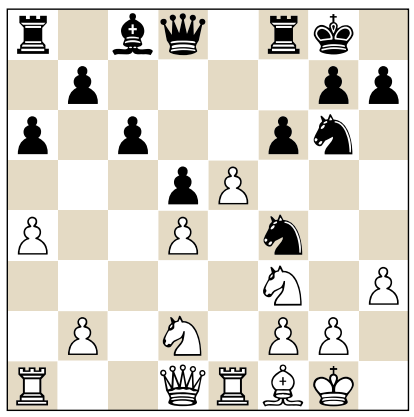
11...c6 12.♗e3 ♘h5 13.♘bd2 ♘hf4 14.♗f1 exd4 15.♗xd4 ♗xd4 16.cxd4

A relatively typical scenario, after all. Black's two knights on the kingside exert serious pressure, but White has the advantage of having two pawns in the centre and a solid position. The position is about level, but things start to go wrong for Nepo from this point on.

16...d5 17.e5

17.a5, clamping down the queenside and not worrying about playing with an isolated pawn, was probably the stronger strategical decision.

17...f6 The break is only natural, but surprisingly I can't see a good way to react to this break.



18.♖a3

18.exf6 ♕xf6 looks very unappealing to me, even though the silicon brains say it's about equal after 19.♕b3.

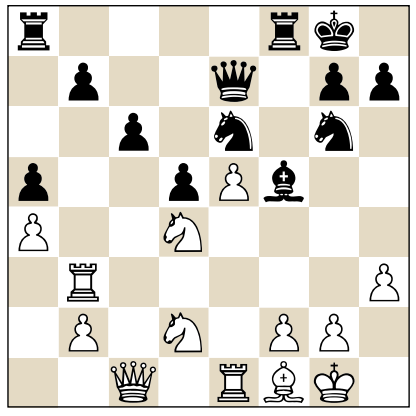
18...fxe5 19.dxe5?!

19.♘xe5 destroys both superfluous knights, on g6 and d2, and was the better continuation.

19...a5 20.♕c1 ♕e7 21.♖b3 ♗f5

With this asymmetrical pawn structure, a big part of considering who has the advantage is who has the more mobile pawns. With the kingside controlled by black pieces and the possibility to roll down the c- and d-pawns together if White is not careful, So has the better position.

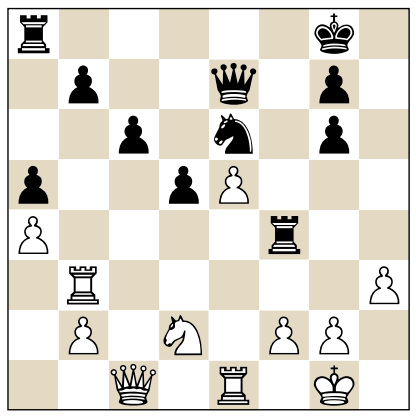
22.♘d4 ♘e6



23.♘xf5? I particularly dislike this move, even while watching the game. It felt wrong to leave the blockading knight on e6 alive.

Better seemed 23.♘xe6 ♗xe6 24.g3, with ideas of a quick f4, although White will have to watch out for a sacrifice on that square, of course. But it keeps the position in resources for both sides: 24...♖f7 25.f4 ♖af8 26.♔h1!? (after 26.♗g2, 26...h5!, with the threat of ...h4, seems strong) 26...h5 27.♕b1 ♗f5 28.♕d1!?, and both players have resources.

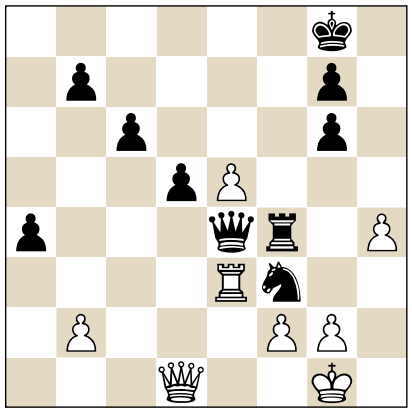
23...♖xf5 24.♗d3 ♖f4 25.♗xg6 hxg6



Now Black's advantage is indisputable. At the very least there is pressure on the kingside, while the knight on e6 is very strong. Add the fact that a4 is not trivially defended, and it's all you need for the winner of the Sinquefield Cup to make it look easy.

26.♕d1 ♖af8 27.♖f3 ♕b4

28.♖xf4 ♖xf4 29.♘f3 ♕xa4
The first pawn falls, and White has garnered no compensation for it.
30.♕d3 ♖f5 31.♕b1 ♕f4 32.♕c2 ♔h7 33.♖e3 ♕c4 34.♕d1 ♖f4 35.♖c3 ♕b4 36.♕c1 a4 37.h4 ♔g8 38.♕b1 ♕e4 39.♕d1 ♘d4 40.♖e3 ♘xf3+



Time-control has been reached, and any endgame is hopeless for White. The rest doesn't need commentary.
41.gxf3 ♕f5 42.e6 ♖xh4 43.♖e4 ♖xe4 44.fxe4 ♕xe4 45.♕d2 ♕xe6 46.♕a5 ♕g4+ 47.♔f1 b5 48.♕c7 g5 49.♕b8+ ♔h7 50.♕d6 b4 White resigned.

■ ■ ■

With Russia and Ukraine, seeds one and three, out of the way, the USA was in an amazing position. Ukraine was keeping up match-point wise, but their tiebreaks were consistently lower than America's. Norway was USA's Round 9 opponent, and except for Magnus Carlsen playing Black against Fabiano Caruana, they were simply outmatched on every board. Nakamura and Shankland played great games with Black to clinch the match, while Wesley accepted a draw for the team in a position in which he might even have had chances to press.

Despite Hikaru's loss to Mchedlishvili when playing Georgia, Wesley came to the rescue just in time by winning an important game. His victory over Pantsulaia was clean, and Sam outplayed Sainikidze on Board 4. Fabiano neutralized the firestorm that was Baadur Jobava in this Olympiad with the black pieces, holding him to a draw and securing the 2½-1½. It seemed that America had ran out of teams to play against.

The last round match against Canada, seeded 25, seemed absolutely ideal on paper. Despite brilliant performances by Hansen and Kovalyov, and an overall spectacular result by the Canadian team, which was led by Evgeny Bareev, there was really no doubt that USA were the clear favourites. Despite these odds, Shankland had his biggest setback in the tournament, losing to Eric Hansen on Board 4 after some failed preparation. Luckily enough, by the time that happened, the other boards' results were clear: Wesley demolished Lesiege, Hikaru was comfortably drawing Kovalyov, while Fabi simply crushed their Board 1.

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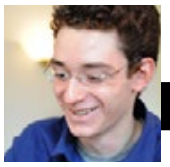
UT DALLAS

Baku (Open) 2016

		Pts	Tiebreak
1	USA	20	413.5
2	Ukraine	20	404.5
3	Russia	18	419
4	India	16	350.5
5	Norway	16	344.5
6	Turkey	16	341.5
7	Poland	16	331
8	France	16	326.5
9	England	16	323
10	Peru	16	306
11	Canada	15	368.5
12	Azerbaijan 1	15	352
13	China	15	348
14	Belarus	15	332
15	Hungary	15	329
16	Iran	15	318
17	Latvia	15	316
18	Greece	15	309.5
19	Paraguay	15	298.5
20	Slovenia	15	294
21	Croatia	15	292
22	Italy	15	284.5
23	Brazil	15	266.5
24	Georgia	14	332.5
25	Cuba	14	314
26	Azerbaijan 2	14	313
27	Israel	14	312.5
28	Kazakhstan	14	308
29	Czech Republic	14	305.5
30	Australia	14	291
31	Spain	14	288.5
32	Argentina	14	287
33	Romania	14	279.5
34	Bosnia & Herzegovina	14	273
35	Moldova	13	326
36	Netherlands	13	313.5
37	Germany	13	292.5
38	Serbia	13	289
39	Uzbekistan	13	286
40	Switzerland	13	282
41	Portugal	13	277
42	Vietnam	13	271
43	Austria	13	266.5
44	Chile	13	266
45	Denmark	13	262
46	Venezuela	13	261
47	Montenegro	13	247.5
48	Qatar	13	245.5
49	Azerbaijan 3	13	241.5
50	Turkmenistan	13	237.5
51	Mongolia	13	236
52	Indonesia	13	234.5
53	Belgium	13	234
54	Ecuador	13	232

157 teams, 11 rounds



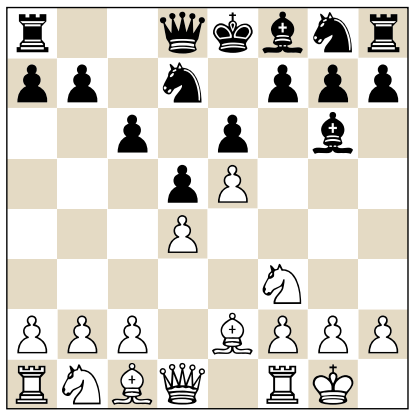
NOTES BY
Fabiano Caruana

Fabiano Caruana
Evgeny Bareev
Baku 2016 (11)
Caro-Kann, Advance Variation

The situation before the final round was anything but easy for us. We were leading, but the Ukrainians were close behind. The Canadian team, our opponents, had been performing strongly, and it was easy to see that the match would be close. I decided it was a good time to bring out the Hansen shirt.

1.e4 c6 Bareev hadn't played professional chess in years before this Olympiad, so with limited recent data it was difficult to predict what his first move would be.

2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.♘f3 e6 5.♗e2 ♘d7 6.0-0 ♗g6



7.a4!? White has an abundance of plans, and although it's a rare enough option, quick expansion and space-gaining on the queenside makes perfect sense to me.

7...♘e7 7...a5 is playable, but a clear concession, since it will make ...c5 unattractive in the future. The a-pawn might also become vulnerable, forcing Black to further weaken his position with ...b6.

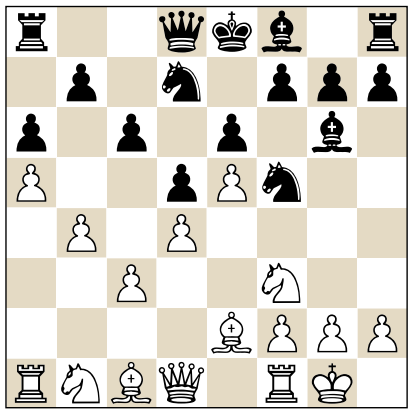
8.a5 a6

Preparing ...c5. If Black had tried to play this immediately, he would have got hit with a6, with a bishop or knight eventually coming to b5: 8...c5 9.a6 b6 10.c4, and the pawn on a6 is a lasting thorn in Black's side.

9.b4! This completely fixes the queenside, leaving Black cramped and with few sources of counterplay.

9...♘f5 10.c3

Now if White is given time, a knight will venture to c5 via d2-b3, which could spell serious trouble for Black, so Evgeny rightly decided to strike immediately.

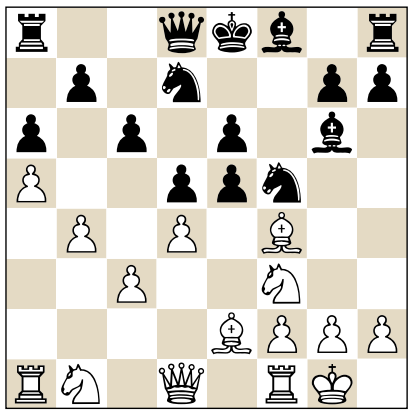


10...f6 After 10...♗e7 11.♘bd2 (the ambitious 11.g4 ♘h4 12.♘xh4 ♗xh4 13.f4 is also going to be seriously unpleasant for Black) 11...0-0 12.♘b3 I'm having all the fun in the position.

11.♗f4 Getting my bishop out to support my pawn before embarking on a knight manoeuvre.

11.♘bd2!? was also worth considering: 11...♕c7 12.♘b3 fxe5 13.dxe5 ♘xe5. I didn't want to sac a pawn unnecessarily, but after 14.♘g5 White has a powerful initiative.

11...fxe5



12.dxe5!? This is a debatable decision, but not a bad one in my view. The alternative 12.♘xe5 was simpler and just as troubling for Black.

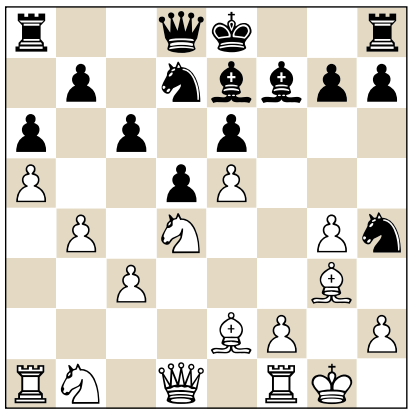
12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.♗xe5 ♗d6 14.♗xd6 ♘xd6 15.♘d2, and White has a solid positional advantage

because of Black's vulnerable dark squares.

12...♗e7 Getting rid of the other bishop to complete Black's development was a viable option: 12...♗h5 13.♘bd2 ♗e7 14.h3 ♗xf3 15.♘xf3 0-0 16.♗d3, with advantage, but Black is alive and kicking, as 16...♘h4? is not a good idea in view of 17.♘d4!.

13.g4 13.♘bd2 0-0 14.♘b3 is natural, but will run into 14...♗h5, and my pieces are awkwardly placed.

13...♘h4 14.♘d4 ♗f7 15.♗g3



15...h5?

This, I think, is already a decisive mistake, and it surprised me a lot. Black gives up a pawn, getting very little in return.

15...0-0 16.f4 is obviously unpleasant for Black.

But 15...g5! would have kept Black in the game: 16.♗xh4 gxh4 17.f4 c5 18.bxc5 ♘xc5 19.♘d2 ♕c7. Black is still worse here, but at least he has chances of counterplay in the future.

16.gxh5

Now I was pretty convinced I would win.

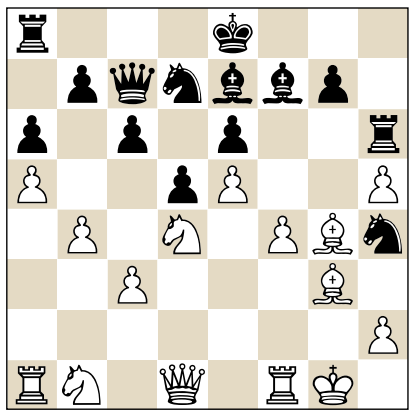
16...♕c7?

But this makes things even easier by allowing my bishop to g4.

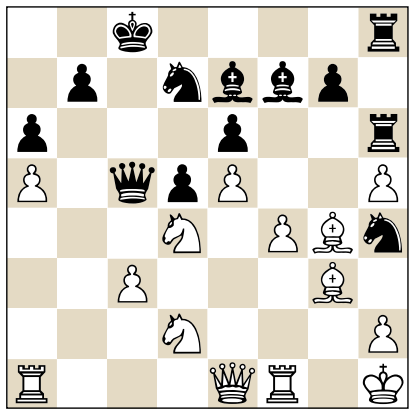
Black's best chance was 16...♘f5! 17.♘xf5 exf5 18.♘a3 ♘f8 19.♘c2 ♘e6 20.f4, which is no fun for him, but at least he may possibly hold thanks to the blockade.

17.♗g4 ♖h6 18.f4

Now it's all over. The knight on h4 is marooned, and all I've left to do is slowly round everything up. The constant threat of f5 doesn't make life any easier for Black.



18...c5 19.bxc5 ♕xc5 20.♔h1 0-0-0 21.♘d2 ♖dh8 22.♕e1



There it goes. The rest is just desperation.

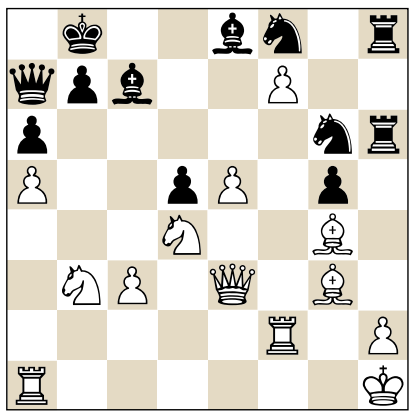
22...♗xh5 23.♗xe6

My first intention was 23.♘xe6, but then I noticed a stunning queen sac: 23...♗xg4! 24.♘xc5 ♘xc5, and all Black's pieces come to life.

23...♗e8 24.f5

Things start looking a bit sad for him. My only concern now was to avoid massive blunders.

24...♗d8 25.♖f4 g5 26.♖f2 ♗c7 27.♕e3 ♔b8 28.f6 ♘f8 29.♗g4 ♘hg6 30.♘2b3 ♕a7 31.f7



And Bareev resigned, because pawns on f7 and e7 are probably going to be enough to win.

NEW IN CHESS

For the match against Canada, Fabiano Caruana brought out the 'Hansen shirt'. On it, the Canadian GM asks the relevant questions 'Who are you? Where do you come from? Are you a chess groupie?'

Wesley also pulled through with a win, and Hikaru made a solid draw, so we won the match and the Olympiad!

True, it was only hours later, sitting in a restaurant, that the news came through to us that we had narrowly defeated Ukraine on tiebreaks. I have to say, the Ukrainian team also played excellently throughout and would have fully deserved the gold medal, but after several decades it was the United States' time to shine.

■ ■ ■

I talked to Sam Shankland about his last-round loss after the Olympiad, and he mentioned that no one is as hard on themselves after a loss as he is, but he felt that the gold had been secured despite the setback, so nothing to worry about. Indeed, due to the insanely complicated tiebreak system used in Baku, most

McFarland

"[The] classic McFarland book: a deeply researched, lovingly produced and definitive enquiry into an area of chess with a view to being the last word on the subject"—*British Chess Magazine*

H.E. Bird. ***A Chess Biography with 1,198 Games.*** Hans Renette. 2016, $75 library binding (21.9 × 28.5 cm), 608pp., 1,198 games, 376 diagrams, 85 photographs, tables, appendices, notes, bibliography, indexes, 978-0-7864-7578-0. No chess player of the 19th century had a longer, more varied career — nor more slashing attack games— than Henry Edward Bird (1829–1908). This is a detailed account of his personal life and full coverage of his vigorous feats.

Vera Menchik. ***A Biography of the First Women's World Chess Champion, with 350 Games.*** Robert B. Tanner. 2016, $49.95 library binding (18.4 × 26 cm), 328pp., 21 photographs, appendices, bibliography, indexes, 978-0-7864-9602-0. Menchik was the first woman in chess history to compete on an equal basis with the top male players and she dominated women's chess for 17 years. Her games feature her own annotations, as well as the notes of Capablanca, Alekhine, Fine and others.

José Raúl Capablanca. ***A Chess Biography.*** Miguel A. Sánchez. 2015, $55 library binding (18.4 × 26 cm), 563pp., 195 annotated games, 55 photographs, appendices, notes, bibliography, indexes, 978-0-7864-7004-4. "Amazing...substantial research"—*Huffington Post;* "even the most ardent Capa fan will learn something new...very readable"—*Chess Life*; "a luxurious work and a true labor of love...well-researched"—*Chess News*; "first rate...highly recommended"— IM John Donaldson (*JeremySilman.com*).

The Classical Era of Modern Chess. Peter J. Monté. 2014, $65 library binding (18.4 × 26 cm), 616pp., 155 illustrations, glossary, appendices, bibliography, index, 978-0-7864-6688-7. "Prodigious scholarship...the erudition, the care, and the enormous effort which went into it is obvious"— Dale Brandreth, *Caissa Editions*; "one of the most important chess books published in the last twenty years...highly recommended"— IM John Donaldson (*JeremySilman.com*); "[this] brilliant, exhaustive work is unique in chess history...an absolute must"—*Huffington Post.*

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2017 Books in Production

The United States Junior Open Chess Championship, 1946–2016. Alex Dunne. 2017, $29.95 softcover (17.8 × 25.4 cm), [156]pp., tables, diagrams, index, 978-1-4766-6881-9. For 70 years the U.S.C.F. has held the U.S. Junior Open. Each year has an annotated game of the winner, brief identifications of notables and when available, a crosstable.

W.H.K. Pollock. ***A Chess Biography with 524 Games.*** Olimpiu G. Urcan *and* John S. Hilbert. 2017, $65 library binding (18.4 × 26 cm), [488]pp., photographs, diagrams, tables, appendices, notes, bibliography, index, 978-0-7864-5868-4. Englishman Pollock played in many important American events of the 1800s and numerous matches against strong players.

A World of Chess. ***Its Development and Variations through Centuries and Civilizations.*** Jean-Louis Cazaux *and* Rick Knowlton. (Not yet in editing.) 2017, price not set, softcover (17.8 × 25.4 cm), ca. 400–500pp., 100s of illustrations & diagrams, maps, notes, bibliography, index, 978-0-7864-9427-9. Immense, deeply researched: the Persian and Arab game familiar to Westerners for 500 years; similar offshoots going back 1500 years still played; the evolution of strategic board games especially in India, China and Japan; and more recent chess variants (board sizes, new pieces, 3-D etc.).

Samuel Lipschütz. ***A Life in Chess.*** Stephen Davies. 2015, $65 library binding (18.4 × 26 cm), 408pp., 249 games, 42 illustrations, appendices, bibliography, indexes, 978-0-7864-9596-2. "A very good book, valuable collectors' item and detailed history... beautifully printed...history at its best"—*British Chess Magazine*; "amazing...a great discovery"—*Huffington Post*; "highly recommended"— IM John Donaldson (*JeremySilman.com*).

Joseph Henry Blackburne. ***A Chess Biography.*** Tim Harding. 2015, $75 library binding (21.9 × 28.5 cm), 592pp., 1,186 games, 95 illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, indexes, 978-0-7864-7473-8. "Comprehensive...beautiful...Harding at his best!"—*Huffington Post*; "a great love for detail...a breathtaking and carefully researched masterpiece"—*Chess News;* "definitive...indispensable"—*Chess Life.*

Ignaz Kolisch. ***The Life and Chess Career.*** Fabrizio Zavatarelli. 2015, $75 library binding (21.9 × 28.5 cm), 360pp., 324 games, 174 diagrams, 63 illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, indexes, 978-0-7864-9690-7. The life of the Hungarian chess champion (1837–1889) and financier, set in the cosmopolitan framework of mid–1800s century Europe. "One of the most accurate chess books that McFarland has ever published"— Edward Winter, *Chess Notes*; "remarkable"—*Huffington Post.*

Mikhail Botvinnik. ***The Life and Games of a World Chess Champion.*** Andrew Soltis. 2014, $49.95 library binding (18.4 × 26 cm), 282pp., 107 annotated games, 127 diagrams, photographs, notes, bibliography, indexes, 978-0-7864-7337-3. "Brilliant... the best book written on Botvinnik by far"—*Chess News* "another Soltis tour-de-force...a fascinating book that is must reading"— IM John Donaldson (*JeremySilman.com)*; Book of the Year— English Chess Federation. Best Book of the Year—*Chess Journalists of America.*

"Very interesting studies...McFarland puts out more scholarly chess books than any other"—*Chess Life*

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Americans thought that the event had been won simply by beating Canada. Slowly, reports trickled in that things were not so easy. If Ukraine beat Slovenia by a large margin, there was an outside chance that the gold medal would go to them. Hikaru and Sam sat at the bar of the Intourist hotel, helplessly awaiting the results, unaware of where the other team members were surely watching with anxiety. Things were going south, game by game: Eljanov was pushing hard against Beliavsky, which would convert a 3½-½ victory for the Ukrainians. The nature of the tiebreak was such that your score against your opponents mattered, so winning against teams that did well was important. Winning by a big margin was very impactful on the tiebreak points.

Slowly, things got worse. John Donaldson was running around with a little notebook but little idea of what was going on. The press room was furiously crunching numbers, the result a complete mystery. It was not until the last game, an irrelevant match between Germany and Estonia down on board 28, that a clear result could be determined. If Seeman from Estonia found a perpetual against Bluebaum, the tournament would go to Ukraine, otherwise America would emerge victorious. The fact that this is how the Olympiad was decided is ridiculous and changes are called for. Bluebaum's king escaped, he converted his material advantage, and America won the gold.

The players were visibly radiant about winning the tournament, and certainly for a couple, it seemed like a weight had been lifted off their shoulders – a job had been done, and it had been done well. The winners claimed there was no pressure going into the tournament to obtain the gold medal, although not medalling would definitely have been considered a disappointment. At the closing ceremony, USA forgot to bring a flag, but they stayed around and took team pictures, surrounded by a big mob of players from other countries asking for autographs and memorabilia with the Olympic champions. There was no team party that night, as everyone celebrated with their own group of friends or trusted ones, while a couple packed up for their early flight out of Azerbaijan, ready for their next big venture.

The win in Baku did not lead to an explosion in the U.S. media, and indeed it barely has been covered in national newspapers. It didn't have the impact that I suspect many people were hoping for now that the top team chess competition has been reconquered by the Americans. I don't think that anyone was asking for a Fischer-boom, but it is still slightly mystifying that the win has received little-to-no attention. No big interviews, few articles in major newspapers. The players received a $4,000 bonus for winning the tournament, rather paltry compared to the $300,000 the Azerbaijanis were reportedly playing for if they had won gold, not to mention the certainty to instantly becoming national heroes.

Despite the fact that the win hasn't taken the country by storm, it is clear that the future of American chess is extremely bright. The engine that made this possible is turning very strongly. With the support of the Saint Louis Chess Club, the Kasparov Chess Foundation, and the strong scholarship-giving universities around the country, more and more players are developing into greatness. Ray Robson and Sam Shankland are not weak players by any means, but they're expected to be even stronger by the time the next Olympiad in Batumi comes around. And they better be if they want to be on the team, as Jeffery Xiong is close on their heels. The top three Americans are not only in the top-10, but it seems that nothing will stop them. They are all young, very young, and incredibly ambitious. ■

SUCCESS OF INDIVIDUALISTIC TEAM USA SETS RUSSIANS THINKING
NEXT TIME, IN BATUMI, OUR PLAYERS WILL NOT EVEN KNOW THEIR TEAMMATES' NAMES!
SURELY FIDE DOESN'T MIND IF THEY PLAY IN BURGAS?
RUSSIA
RUSSIA
VONK
BEREND VONK

LUDUS INTERRUPTUS

Gone are the days, in the not too distant past, when the manager of a player in a World Championship could sit in an auditorium, just a few metres from his charge, regularly glancing at his mobile phone. And while there are countless innocent reasons why a person might do such a thing, an unscrupulous individual, with a pre-arranged set of signals, would have found no barrier to communicating a decisive combinative blow at a critical juncture, received by simple text message from an accomplice watching online. Before any potential litigant slaps a defamation lawsuit upon me, let me state categorically that I cast aspersions upon no man. I am merely remarking that, in recent history, security precautions, even at major events, have been woefully lax. In such circumstances, it little matters whether the players are scanned electronically beforehand – as they were in the case mentioned above – when all manner of devices are allowed into the venue.

A number of well-publicised cheating cases have since demolished this complacency. Everyone understands that, unlike in physical sports, doping is a red herring, and drug-testing a charade – a fig-leaf to provide IOC compliance, essential to the funding of certain federations. No, the main existential problem of chess – apart from the painful plight of being governed by a thoroughly incompetent and disreputable administration – is electronic fraud.

Both smart phones and watches were banned at the 2016 Baku Olympiad. Smart phones are, of course, fairly powerful computers, but chess programmes can now also run on Android apps on watches. It was just as well that the much detested zero-tolerance rule has been relaxed, as it is harsh to default people who have been deprived of the means of knowing the correct time. Someone in authority has obviously been watching too many James Bond movies because pens were also forbidden.

One could perhaps quibble with these measures in force in Baku, especially the latter, but they strike the unbiased observer as a broadly sensible approach to tackling a serious issue. Not so the following injunction: 'The players of every Match *must* inform their Match Arbiter..., when they leave the playing area in order to go to the toilet, to the bar or to the smoking area.'

This extraordinarily impertinent fiat – treating adults like kindergarten pupils – epitomises the utter contempt in which ordinary players are held by the highest officials. It was no surprise that the overwhelming majority of arbiters, who were left to enforce the gross indignity of regulating bodily functions, wanted nothing to do with it.

While common sense led to the potty law being largely shunned, the same was not true, unfortunately, for the following malign, Olympiad directive: '*During the round*: there will be random checks for approximately 30 to 40 players. The checks will be done by the Anti cheating Arbiters with the use of ... scanners ... and will take 5 to 10 seconds for every check. In the case where there is any indication, a thorough check will follow, according to the art. 11.3.b. of the Laws of Chess (in a private room, in the presence of Sector Arbiter and/or Chief Arbiter...). If a player refuses to cooperate with these obligations, the arbiter shall take measures in accordance with Article 12.9 and will forfeit the player.'

Even generously accepting the implausible '5 to 10 seconds' claim (how about buckles, studs, zips, coins, shoes, or even wired bras, for example?) this is still legislation of astounding imbecility. Do the promulgators of this proposal have the slightest idea of what is the true nature of tournament chess? If so, do they care? Have they not heard of concentration? Are they not aware that it is essential to performance? And in what other sport would you handicap an athlete while competing to conduct a random check? It is as ridiculous as demanding a marathon runner provide a urine sample half-way through a race.

As I discovered subsequently, trouble had been brewing throughout the tournament. Hikaru Nakamura, for instance, had been stopped twice during one game and was thus hardly to blame for reacting with anger. But matters came to a head in round seven, during my tense encounter against Li Chao from China. Returning from the bathroom, I was accosted by Jamie Kenmure – a man I had previously described (in New In Chess 2014/6, page 39) as 'an absolute menace' – who attempted to detain me

to perform a search with his electronic wand. This buffoon was rewarded for his servility to the Kirsan regime, in Baku, by being appointed a 'Class A' international arbiter (IA), in corrupt contravention of the regulation that stipulates a requirement of five years' experience (he qualified in 2014).

Angered by this highly unwelcome intrusion (I was already in time pressure), I brushed straight past him. After the game, which I won (*for my analysis, see the next pages*), I was immediately required to submit to a thorough search, with which I readily complied. Naturally, nothing was found. Klaus Deventer IA informed me that I was in breach of the regulations and issued me with an official warning for my contumacy. I told him not to bother: if he wanted to search me during play in future, he should just forfeit me – a stance fully supported by my captain, Malcolm Pein. Nevertheless the threat greatly disturbed my equilibrium, not helped by the Chief Arbiter, Faik Gasanov, coming to chat with me shortly before play began the next day (he claimed not to support the measure, but asked for my compliance). It was perhaps no coincidence that I then played by far my weakest game of the event.

On deeper examination though, Deventer's position is not only morally questionable, it is of doubtful legality too. It is clear from the wording of the new Olympiad regulation, above, that the supposed right of Arbiters to harass a player *during* the game is a codicil to Article 11.3 of the Laws of Chess, which permits a general search (presumably before and/or afterwards, although this is not specified). However this exorbitant new power is flatly contradicted by Article 12.2 which states:

'The arbiter shall:
– ensure fair play.
– act in the best interest of the competition.
– ensure that a good playing-environment is maintained.
– ensure that the players are not disturbed.'

I would argue that scanning players while in play breaches all four clauses, but in particular a) and undoubtedly d). Indeed the last point is so crystal clear that several arbiters told me privately that they considered the practice to be totally indefensible. They are supported in this view by the 'Arbiters' Manual 2016' which provides lengthy guidance and interpretation of the Laws:

' (the arbiters) have not only to control the games, but also to ensure the best conditions, for the players not to be disturbed and will be able to play without any problem.'

I strongly suspect the experienced Deventer – whom I will not accuse of ignorance – was fully aware he was on shaky legal ground. But perhaps the Anti-Cheating Guidelines provide him succour? Not so. Page 6 of this splendid document, co-authored by Deventer himself, and approved by the Presidential Board, states:

'Tournament organizers are also free to introduce their own regulations and conditions for events, provided they are in accord with the Laws of Chess.'

This regulation is not.

'Someone in authority has obviously been watching too many James Bond movies because pens were also forbidden.'

Before submitting this piece, I consulted 75-year-old David Anderton, the former England captain and legal adviser for FIDE, for his sagacious views. He remarked that the Laws of Chess have always been woolly and vague, and that arbiters have the tendency to assume ever greater powers for themselves (although the latest controversial regulations are reputed to have emanated from higher up: – 'It doesn't matter' was the curt answer of Deputy President Makropoulos when I asked him directly whence they came). However, rather than stressing the legal merits of the case, David preferred to focus on the obvious absurdity of interrupting people with play in progress. Any regular competitor could understand that, he said. Indeed, with electronic checks both before and after the game, surveillance cameras everywhere, security sweeps of the hall and toilets, the odious imposition of mid-game disturbances becomes pointless. One Japanese player, with poor knowledge of English, was found to have a mobile with him and duly forfeited. If the Azeri security staff would have removed all such devices at the point of entry, rather than wishfully requesting that they were handed in past the checkpoint, even this solitary case of accidental cheating would not have occurred. ■

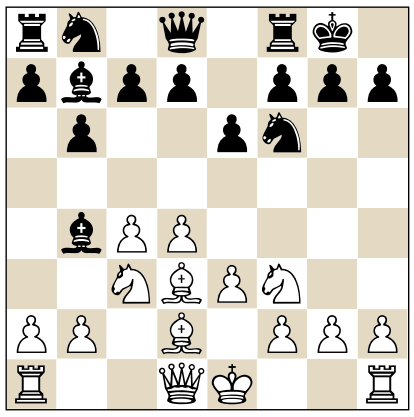
The incident described by our columnist Nigel Short on the previous pages took place in Round 7, when England faced China. Playing China's Li Chao (2746) on Board 3, the former World Championship finalist reminded us that he remains a formidable player, as he helped his team to score an impressive victory against the defending champions.

NOTES BY
Nigel Short

Li Chao
Nigel Short
Baku 2016 (7)
Nimzo-Indian, Three Knights

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘f3 b6 5.e3 ♗b7 6.♗d3 0-0 7.♗d2!?

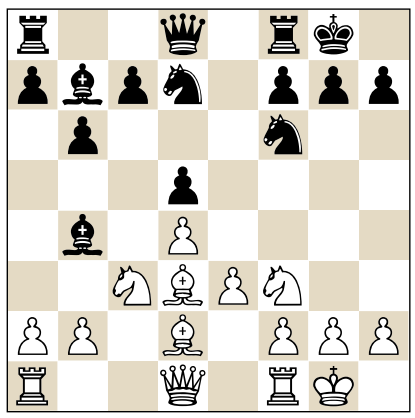
This modest, but highly sensible move caught me slightly off guard. I am much more familiar with the regular 7.0-0 ♗xc3 8.bxc3, after which I have tended to favour 8...c5!?.



7...d5

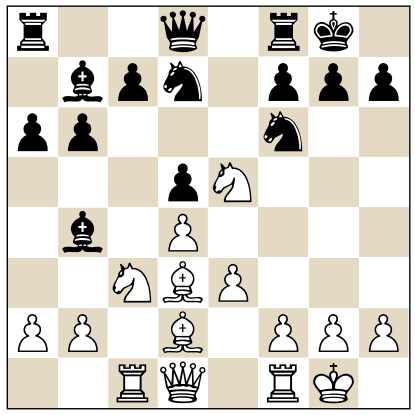
The most popular, but there is a strong argument for 7...d6, which appeared the very next day (!) with a similarly unsatisfactory result for the Chinaman: 8.♕c2 c5 9.a3 ♗xc3 10.♗xc3 cxd4 11.exd4 d5 12.c5 ♘c6 13.0-0 bxc5 14.dxc5 d4 15.♗d2 ♕d5 16.♖fe1 e5 17.♗c4 ♕d7 18.♘xe5 ♘xe5 19.♖xe5 ♗xg2 20.♔xg2 ♕g4+ 21.♔h1 ♕f3+ 22.♔g1 ♕g4+ 23.♔f1 ♕h3+ 24.♔e1 ♕xh2 25.f4 ♕g1+ 26.♗f1 ♘g4 27.♕c4 ♖ae8 28.c6 ♘xe5 29.fxe5 ♖xe5+ 30.♔d1 ♖f5 31.c7 d3 32.♕xd3 ♖xf1+ 33.♔c2 ♖xa1 0-1, Li Chao-Z.Almasi, Baku 2016.

8.cxd5 exd5 9.0-0 ♘bd7



10.♖c1!

By far the most annoying move, creating tactical threats against c7. **10...a6** ... which I decided to stop. **11.♘e5!** The whole point of White's plan: the knight appears on a strong central square from which it will be difficult to dislodge.



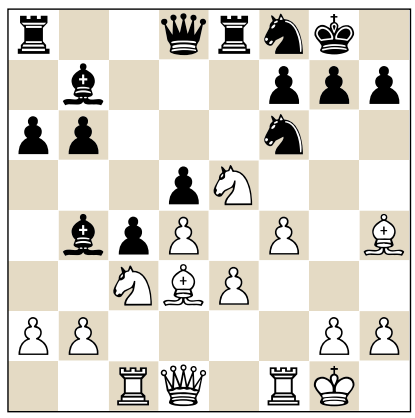
11...♖e8

I had a huge long think here because I was rather unhappy with this move. White's plan becomes very simple – attack on the kingside – whereas Black's counterplay is nowhere to be seen. Of course, what I really wanted to do was remove the offending horse with 11...♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♘d7 13.f4 ♘c5, but I was (rightly) concerned that my pieces were awkwardly placed: 14.♗c2! (14.♗b1 d4 15.♘e2 ♕d5 16.♖f2 dxe3 17.♗xe3 ♕xd1+ 18.♖xd1 ♖ad8 is OK but I will admit that I was worried about 14.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 15.♕h5+ ♔g8 16.♖f3 although it is apparently only a draw) 14...d4 15.♘a4 ♗xd2 16.♕xd2 and this gives White a comfortable edge.

12.f4

Now it is too late.

12...♘f8 13.♗e1 c5 14.♗h4 c4



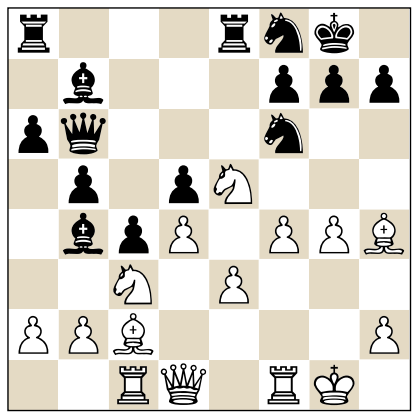
These are the sort of tension-releasing moves that are harshly condemned in the old textbooks, and with considerable justification. However, I couldn't see what else to do.

15.♗c2 b5 16.g4

Optically threatening, but perhaps a tad imprecise.

16.♖f3! ♕b6 17.♗xf6 ♕xf6 18.♖h3 maintains a flowing initiative.

16...♕b6



17.g5

Now 17.♗xf6? is met by 17...gxf6!.

17...♘e4 Plugging the diagonal.

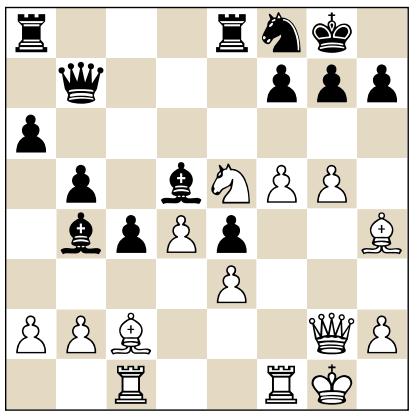
18.♘xe4 dxe4 19.♕e2 ♗d5

The bishop is optimally placed on this fine square. Nevertheless the position is still fraught with danger.

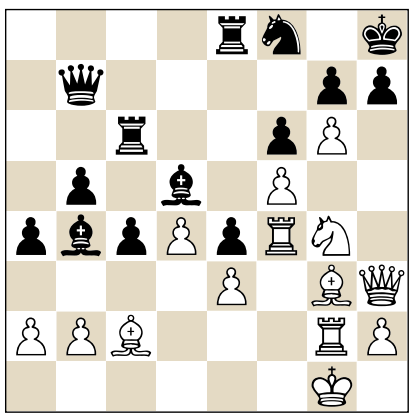
20.♕g2 ♕b7 21.f5

And roughly around here, with a pawn avalanche about to break over my king and with just half an hour on my clock remaining, an interfering ginger-haired moron decided to interrupt the sacred rite that is chess

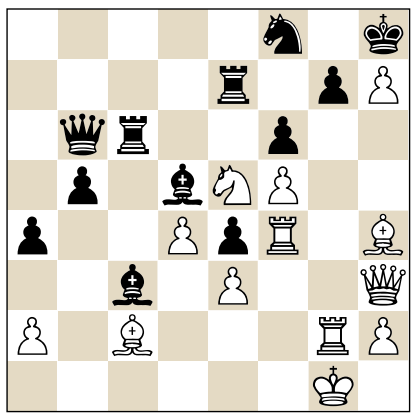
and conduct an electronic search of my person. He can count himself lucky not to have been physically assaulted.



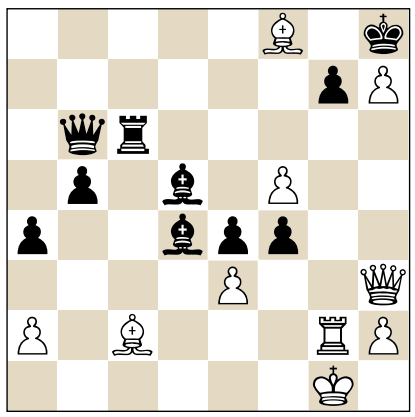
21...♘d7 22.♘g4 ♔h8
A wise precaution.
23.♗g3 ♖ac8 24.♕h3 f6
I started to become more optimistic after this fine positional move, as it was not clear to me how White should proceed. Still, Black is far from generating any counterplay of his own.
25.g6 ♘f8 26.♖f2 ♖c6 27.♖cf1 a5!
Black needs this pawn on a4 to prise open some lines.
28.♖g2 a4 29.♖f4



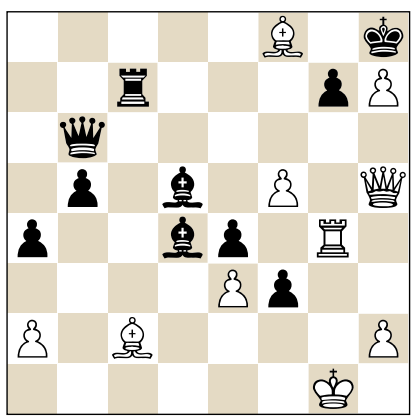
♘f2 and ♖h4 ideas appear, but Black is ready with ideas of his own.
29...c3! 30.bxc3 ♗xc3 31.♗h4 ♕b6
Defending against 32.♘xf6. These moves were part calculation and part general principles as by now we were both short of time.
32.gxh7 ♖e7
When playing this I had seen the following continuation, but there was a gaping hole in my analysis.
33.♘e5!



33...fxe5? 33...♖d6! 34.♘g6+ ♘xg6 35.fxg6 ♖c7 is unclear. **34.♗xe7?** I had suddenly spotted 34.f6! gxf6 35.♗xe4!!, but before I could find a reply (there isn't any – Black is completely busted as the vulnerable square g8 comes under devastating attack) my opponent moved. **34...exf4 35.♗xf8 ♗xd4!** The only resource, but a great one! Defence is combined with attack.



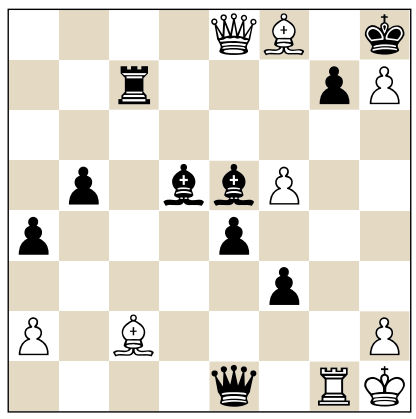
36.♕g4? 36.f6! ♗xf6 37.♕d7! ♕xe3+ 38.♔h1 ♕d4 39.♕e8! ♔xh7 40.♗d6!! is a miracle draw. Find that with your flag on the edge! **36...♖c7 37.♕h5 f3 38.♖g4** At this point I understood Black was completely winning and I became dizzy with the possibilities.



38...♗e5?? 38...♗xe3+ 39.♔h1 ♕f6

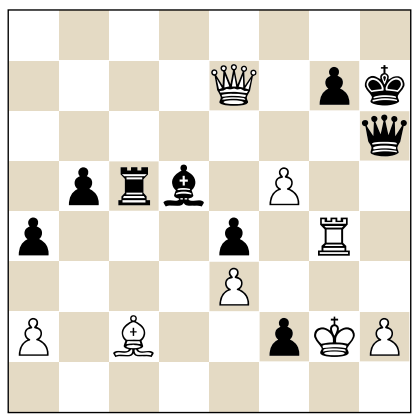
'An interfering ginger-haired moron decided to interrupt the sacred rite that is chess and conduct an electronic search of my person.'

is one way to end the game abruptly.
39.♗c5? I was utterly shocked by this move, but it is losing. After the correct 39.♕e8! ♕xe3+ 40.♔h1 Black, and not White, is in mortal peril. Only 40...♕e1+! 41.♖g1



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

41...♔xh7!! avoids defeat. White must then find the study-like 42.♗c5! (42.♖xe1? f2) to ensure a perpetual.
39...♕h6! Good enough. But not 39...♖xc5? 40.♕e8+ ♔xh7 41.♖h4+ ♕h6 42.♖xh6+ gxh6 43.♕e7+.
40.♕e8+ ♔xh7 41.♕xe5 ♖xc5 42.♕e7 f2+! 43.♔g2



43...♗c4! Killing. 43...f1♕+ 44.♔xf1 ♕h3+ 45.♖g2 ♕f3+ 46.♔g1 ♕xe3+ 47.♔h1 allows resistance.
44.♔xf2 ♕xh2+ White resigned. ■

With his original, convention-defying ideas, his bohemian lifestyle and his approachability, he is one of the most popular grandmasters on the circuit. Fans, friends and colleagues alike were delighted when Baadur Jobava won the gold medal on Board 1 with an awesome 2926 performance. In a frank and often hilarious interview, the Georgian GM expresses his belief in his talent, but also speaks about his demons and his addiction to gambling.

DIRK JAN TEN GEUZENDAM

'I can't say I did a huge amount of work. But right from the start it looked as if Jobava had to make plus 6 in this tournament and there was nothing you could do about it!'

‘I am my own worst enemy’

Interview Baadur Jobava

Once his game is over, Baadur Jobava is immediately ready to give an interview. Of course, why not? He is in a good mood. In the final round he drew as Black with Dragan Solak from Turkey. His 8/10 score on Board 1 for Georgia should be good enough for a gold medal – his second gold medal at an Olympiad after he scored 8½ from 10 in Calvia 12 years ago. Let’s talk, he says. But where? That’s a good question. The rules are strict at this Olympiad, and once a player has finished his game and left the playing area he is not allowed to come back. And he wants to stay close to his team and see how their match will end.

After some searching we find a corner in the arena where several matches have already finished. There is no one near that we can disturb, but I am not entirely sure this is going to work. Jobava is a lively talker and laughs a lot. Although he tries to speak in a low voice, we cannot fail to attract some attention as he regularly slaps my shoulder or offers his hand for a high-five or a hand slap. But apart from the occasional frown and meaningful look from a distant arbiter nothing happens. Jobava looks so revved up that I forgive myself for asking the eternal sports question about how he feels.

‘When you win, you are motivated. In team competitions it is very important to be motivated and feel responsibility for the team. For me that is not pressure, but motivation. Many Georgian friends and fans are following you, which gives you energy, you want to play well. I am always in touch with them via Skype or Facebook. In team competitions it’s very important to have a strategy. It’s not like an individual tournament where you can take risks and play creatively. Here you can also play creatively, but on a more solid base. For instance, if someone on your team wins and you see that two other boards are going to draw, and you have a playable position but can make a draw, you don’t think about your own result. And if someone has a losing position, you continue to play; that’s the strategy. This was working and I was in good form and everything went very well.’

Good form remains the eternal mystery, where does it come from?

‘I don’t have an explanation. I did not prepare specially for this tournament. I can’t say I did a huge amount of work. But right from the start it looked as if Jobava had to make plus 6 in this tournament and there was nothing you could do about it! (Laughing) That’s a joke of course, but I was working hard during the tournament. I prepared for every game. Don’t think about the result, just approach every game as if it’s your last one.

ETERI KUBLASHVILI

'I am happy about my own result, but I care more about the team. If we win today, we'll be in the top-6 and we'll be very happy because we will qualify for the World Teams. But we still have big problems. Our last board is losing, second board has chances to win and third board will be decisive (in the end, Board 3 won, but Board 2 lost and a 2½-1½ defeat threw Georgia back to 24th place – DJtG).

You say you prepared hard. When you play openings like 1.d4 d5 2.♘c3, people may wonder what that preparation looks like?
'For this I actually want to thank a young Russian International Master. He's 20 years old, Maxim Lugovsky. He lives in Krasnodar and he contacted me before the Olympiad for online chess lessons. And you don't believe what he wanted to study (laughs). You understand, yes? This system. I had problems with the system and I was very lazy. But he was paying me, and this was my motivation. It was good for him and for me. What I played against Topalov, for example, these ideas I had already found before, but we worked on them more deeply. I could not predict what Topalov would play, but at some point we were equal. Then he probably relaxed. The aim was to have a safe position, no risk of losing, and then push. And this was working one hundred per cent in this game. When I was working before the game, that was concrete preparation for that opponent. To choose the right opening. For example yesterday with Caruana, I completely predicted everything. I caught him in the opening and he was left with a position that was virtually lost strategically. But when he played 17...♕d7, I played the very stupid move 18.♘d2. 18.♖b1, I think, would have given me a big advantage, because the endgame is losing. I chose the cheap way. I went for an endgame which I thought was better, but it was not. We could have saved the match with that win. So sad.'

You have contributed many original ideas to chess. One wonders whether you look for them because you don't want to do what everyone does or whether it's laziness sometimes?
'(Smiles) OK, both, actually. In our age, even if you find some original ideas, you have to work on them, because the computer will kill them if they're no good. Your opponent is preparing with a computer, and you have to, too. If you manage to prove an advantage against your computer, it means you will also have an advantage against your opponent's computer.'

'Even if you find some original ideas, you have to work on them, because the computer will kill them if they're no good.'

But most of the time you just want to get a playable position.
'Yes, that's the idea, because we are not playing against computers, and humans make mistakes.'

If you had to name three of your opening ideas that you are most proud of...
'(Immediately) Of course the 2003 game against Bareev, Caro-Kann, the d5 sacrifice. I found it at home, over the board, without a computer. Afterwards I checked it with the computer and it was completely correct. It was a very famous idea at the time. I don't know if you remember it...'

Yes, because I was there, in Crete. I asked you to annotate the game for New In Chess and you said there was no need to, as everything was already in your computer. And we went to your room and you showed me your analysis.
'Ah, yes? Amazing, how do you remember this? Thirteen years ago, fantastic memory... (Thinks briefly) There was another interesting idea I remember, Calvia, the next year. Against Grischuk, Slav Defence. I found something in this old Morozevich line with ...g5, an idea with castling queenside. Afterwards it was refuted, but at the time it was a big shock for Grischuk. I managed to win and then the following year at the European Individual Championship in Warsaw I played against the young Carlsen. How old was he, 14? He had prepared this line I had played against Grischuk, but I knew it better and won a nice game.

'But OK, what I also like are ideas like d4 d5, Knight c3, Bishop f4...'

That was actually what I meant. The examples that you gave are almost scientific opening preparation. But then there is the original Jobava, who plays 1.b3, essentially saying, let's play and have fun...
'Yeah, b3, do you know where that actually came from? I was living with my ex-wife in Ukraine, in the Odessa region, Ilishevsky is the city's name. One of my friends, a kids' coach, used to be a very gifted, talented player, but then he stopped playing. His name is Roman Tisevic. Originally he was called Roman Kozul, but he changed his name to Tisevic. He told me that he was teaching kids to play 1.b3. And we went running together every day and discussed this, and at some point I thought, why not try it? The first time I tried it was in the Fujairah Open in 2012, and it went well, 4½ out of 5 with 1.b3, something like that. And of course I want to thank him; he is a very creative player, very original. The g6 line in the Kalashnikov system was also his idea.'

And what about the Jobava System with Bishop f4?
'Aha. This I also discussed with him. We were speaking about the Veresov Variation and I said, why play Bishop g5? Why not put it on f4? In the Veresov, usually after Bishop g5, Black plays Knight d7, sometimes c5, Queen b6, Queen c7 is coming. So why not put the bishop on f4? Because I like the Italian, where I play Bishop c4, and when I play c3, it's almost the same. A mirror. And also this bishop will be controlling the c7 and b8-squares at some point, and also e5. OK, it's not advantageous for White, but absolutely new theory. And the guys still have problems; they need to check more carefully.'

MARIA EMELIANOVA

The best performers on Board 1 with their medals: Leinier Dominguez (Cuba, silver), Baadur Jobava (Georgia, gold) and Fabiano Caruana (USA, bronze).

Playing all these original ideas as a chess professional has made you a kind of cult figure. There are so many chess players who just love Jobava. In what sense does that motivate you?
'Of course, if young guys are trying to copy you or follow your style, that's... For example, in the '60s, when Tal won against Botvinnik, Botvinnik wrote that the world had gone crazy (laughs), Tal sacrificed pieces as if they were nothing. In the book on the revenge match Botvinnik writes that he had prepared especially, because he wanted to prove that the classical style is still better. And he succeeded. OK, Tal was not in the best physical shape. What to say? I am glad if somebody tries to follow my ideas.'

It also make you more vulnerable, because in the end it takes more energy to play like this.
'Yes, that's the problem. When you are in unknown territory you spend a lot of energy. Sometimes it's very bad. For instance, if you play a long tournament, like Wijk aan Zee, you get tired at some stage. So it's good to have a mix. A solid repertoire which you know very well, and this. But that requires additional work and that's not what some people want. You know who.'

You know him.
'Yes, unfortunately I know him very well.'

He lives very close to where you live.
'Yes, yes (laughs).'

Actually, where are you living right now?
'In Tbilisi, with my second wife, parents, brother and little son Maxim, who became one last month. With my ex-wife I have a 5-year-old girl. So I have to work harder now, with two kids.'

Did you have examples? Original players that you admire?
'In history we know many such players. As a kid I grew up with classical books and players like Carl Schlechter, Janowski, Tartakower, Maroczy, Réti, not only reading about them but also analysing their games. My father was sitting with my brother and they were studying them. This always stays in your mind. This is work that doesn't disappear; it stays with you through the years. It's very important to have a basis. Some players, and I am not going to mention names, are trying to prove that these were stupid principles, that they no longer need the classics. These guys actually grew up with the classics and they say we don't need them. That's completely stupid. It's like in maths. If you don't know the theory, the history of maths, you are completely zero. You cannot begin directly from higher mathematics. You start with the classics.

'My idols? From childhood on it was always Alexander Alekhine. Kotov's collection of his games was even my first book. And Botvinnik, of course. All his books I ate for dinner, as we say, they were my daily diet. I still return to them, they are very good. Because at that period in the Soviet Union, people didn't think about making money, they were really working for ideas, for principles. They wrote what they really thought and felt with their heart. If you want to make progress, it's absolutely necessary to read classical books, study classical players.'

The way you describe these classical players sounds romantic. Are you a romantic player?
'Yeah. Sometimes I wish I had been born in the old times. Or at least

I wish I could go there by time machine and meet these guys. Lasker, Botvinnik. You'd play without computer, really play chess, like a game. Yes, with a time machine I'd also visit Morphy. Of course. Or let's go to Philidor. I like his system, with both colours! Philidor, a great musical composer and a chess player with a great understanding.'

People not only see you as a romantic, but also as a bohemian. That's another reason why you are popular. You successfully play unorthodox openings and you don't hide that you like going out. How hungry are you to live your life?
'Actually, in these team competitions I am a really boring guy. I am a real professional here. Only preparation, food, sleep, chess. Only that, because I'm not alone. If you don't sleep and you lose... This is not my captain's orders, this is my wish. In team competitions, well, when I was very young it was different, but when I reached a more solid age, I became like this. When you're first board, you have to be an example. If you go to a discotheque and drink, what do you do? Of course you don't sleep.'

Then with such a good result here, you might be motivated to be a bit quieter at the next tournament.
'It's good motivation, but this is very hard to do when you go to an individual tournament. When you say it, it sounds very smart and very nice. OK, let's see. If you want to make progress you sometimes have to be professional.'

But in fact you want to live every day three times.
'Yes, yes, yes (laughs). I'm not a mayfly.'

Do you know this cartoon? There are these two mayflies, and the male says to the female, what do you mean 'not today'? We live only one day!

'So that's why I stopped drinking. Not completely, but I am trying. At least not to drink where there is a casino.'

'Fantastic! (He slaps my shoulder again and laughs heartily) Fantastic joke.'

Some players go out and more or less try to keep this private...
'Yes, maybe they do it in big cities, where you can disappear. But in Wijk aan Zee this is impossible.'

But there you didn't mind telling people before a game that you had only slept two hours.
'Yes, because everybody knows anyway (laughs). They have spies; they follow guys till they go home.'

It's no secret either that you also like to gamble.
'Absolutely, yes. Actually this is maybe why I have this style in chess. I like to play. I cannot churn out 45 moves, write down one more move and it's a draw. As in the Marshall. That's not my style.'

It's your gambling instinct that makes you play differently?
'Yes, but sometimes it's bad. I am a gambler, and if I go to a casino, I can lose everything or I can win big. I cannot be solid; just take a little gain and leave. It's all or nothing (laughs). That's my style.'

What are the games you like when you go gambling?
'Blackjack, Texas Hold'em, for sure. Blackjack is my favourite. I don't like roulette, for example. Completely stupid. Something is running and you... I like sport and Blackjack is a kind of sport, it's up to you. Texas Hold'em is completely a sport; you need to trick your opponent. But in roulette, what do you do? You put down your chips and they take your money, completely stupid. I would play roulette when I had lost everything and only had something like five or 10 dollars left. And it usually worked. Yes, I'd put it on a number, 26, my birthday. In my whole life I bet, like, 10 or 11 times, playing like that, and two or three times it came up. I had 10 dollars, multiplied it by 36 and went back to Blackjack and won 5000 dollars. This happened to me once, in Georgia, a long time ago. And once I remember I was down to 10 dollars, went to the roulette, made 360 dollars and then I went to play Russian Poker. You know the rules? It's like Texas Hold'em, but you have five cards and you can change any card. Buy all five cards, four cards, but you need to pay the same amount as what you have put up as the ante. And double, and then double. And one moment I go down again and I have the last bet. Twenty-five, fifty dollars. They give me the combination straight flush and this paid very big money. But this happens once in a lifetime. I don't remember exactly, but something like four or five thousand dollars (laughs).'

And you feel you are good at Blackjack?
'I played very well when it was hand shuffled and dealt by hand, but now it's done by automats everywhere. That's non-stop shuffle. They deal, it goes back, the automat shuffles and god knows what goes on. This I almost always lose.'

Do you also play online?
'Not so often. In Georgia I also stopped playing in the casino, almost. Maybe once every two weeks I go with a small amount. Actually, a few months ago I went three days in a row to the casino. I won three times in a row. In Blackjack. I was thinking, what's going on? Because when you don't play often, your energy grows and things go your way. When you

play every day, the system in the casino is against you. You cannot win every day. If you play only sometimes, your chances of winning are better. It's about energy. They see you the first time. Maybe they also cheat, they sometimes give you fair play to catch you, give you a fairly small amount, perhaps two thousand. Then the next day you come and you lose everything. Including your winnings. A classic case. (Laughs and looks at me) I am sure you won't go there if you ask me all these questions. I can see it in your eyes. What is he talking about? (Laughs long) Never start. It really is poison. It's a very big pleasure. It's like drugs. You have to be very strong not to gamble. Smoking is hard to quit and this is a hundred times worse.'

So no plans to quit?
'Maybe not to play so actively. But I like it, why stop? Usually I stop when I don't have money. If I have money, it's hard. And alcohol is a terrible thing. If you drink and you have money in your pocket and then there's a casino... So that's why I stopped drinking. Not completely, but I am trying. At least not to drink where there is a casino. After what happened in Legnica, at the European Individual Championship in 2013, I stopped drinking. (He arrived for the last round drunk, together with his fellow-countryman David Lomsadze, whose face was covered in blood. The organizers called for the police and an ambulance – DJtG.) There I drank too much. What happened on that last day was a good reason to stop. Terrible.'

During this Olympiad you grew a beard.
'I like hockey very much, I love it. And they have this superstition that during a play-off they don't shave. For me this is like a play-off, so I don't shave. It's my conviction. When I shaved before a game, the maximum that I achieved was a draw. And I usually lost. Of eight or nine games I lost six, or seven. If I shaved that day. So yesterday I shaved in the evening, before 11.59. (Laughs hard and then adds) Joking! But actually I don't care about my looks. The important thing was to bring points.'

What did the people around you say about your beard?
'Actually (my wife) Alexandra likes it, but my mother and brother don't. They say, it looks completely bad on you. She said, it's OK. So whom to believe? What do you say? You are objective. (When I don't reply immediately) Sh.. OK, you think it's bad.'

Years ago I had a beard and I had the impression that my then girlfriend's father didn't like it. At some point I shaved it off and he looks at me...
'(Interrupts) And he kissed you! It's you!'

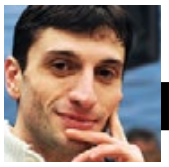
No, he said, ah now I see, there is nothing wrong. I didn't understand why you had a beard and thought that perhaps you had a harelip.
(He laughs loud and long and holds up his hand for it to be slapped).

In conclusion, what are your ambitions for the coming years? Where do you feel your career is now?
'Some friends write to me on Facebook that this result should not make me relax. It shows that you can win against anyone. And that you can still make progress. There is room for improvement. Just work hard and we want to see you at 2750 and maybe even 2800. OK, I don't know. I am my own worst enemy. That's for sure. If I am concentrated and working, then I play well. If I give in to bullshit, drinking, gambling... For instance, in Wijk aan Zee (last year), it was really a hard time for me. First of all I had played four or five tournaments in a row, including a match with Timman. I was totally exhausted. Then I had this period with my ex-wife, we had just divorced, big problems, I was totally depressed. And exactly then there was this super-tournament and I played completely stupidly. I could not sleep, I could not eat. You saw my games. It was such a pity. I wanted to show the best result against great players and played so badly. But this result here was like a small comeback. I played top players and I played well. It was not a super-tournament, but still. It showed that I can still do it. I think I am the type of player who doesn't make progress early. I'm like wine, I have to mature. Maybe now my best age is coming, I don't know. I hope so. But I need to deserve it and work hard. Let's see.' ■

Baadur Jobava

Born: November 26, 1983, Gali, Soviet Union

Career highlights
2001: International Grandmaster.
2003: Wins Dubai Open.
2003: Georgian Champion.
2004: Gold medal first board Calvia Olympiad.
2006: Wins Aeroflot Open.
2007: Georgian Champion.
2008: Shared first in President's Cup Baku.
2010: Silver in European Individual Championship.
2010: Defeats Magnus Carlsen at Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad.
2011: European Rapid Champion in Warsaw.
2012: Georgian Champion.
2012: September, highest rating so far: 2734.
2014: Shared second in Tata Steel Challengers.
2015: Wins Bronstein Memorial in Minsk.
2015: Wins Vlissingen Open.
2016: Gold medal first board Baku Olympiad.

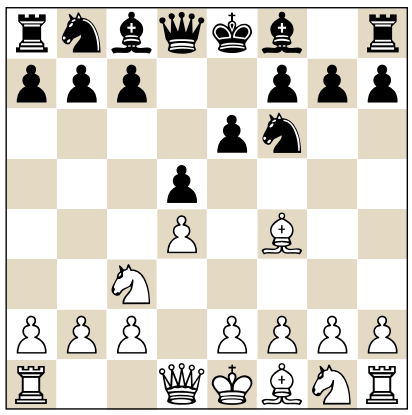


NOTES BY
Baadur Jobava

Baadur Jobava
Veselin Topalov
Baku 2016 (4)
Queen's Pawn Opening

When people ask me about my favourite game from the Olympiad, I pick this one – against Topalov. It always is a nice feeling to get a chance to outplay a strong opponent in an almost equal position. I will try to give you an impression of this game as I experienced it in my mind and will do so in my words – more similar to the thinking process during the game than to the classical post-game analysis, and I hope that you will like it!

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♗f4 e6

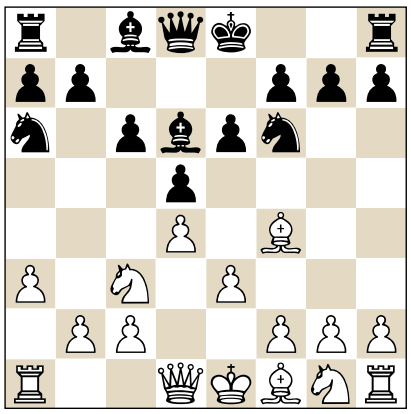


4.♘b5 This is the main line in the opening theory of this line. I have also played a few games that went 4.e3 c5 5.♘b5, when after 5...♘a6 6.c3 ♗e7 7.h3 0-0 8.♘f3 ♗d7 9.a4 ♕b6 10.dxc5 ♕xc5 11.♘fd4 ♖fd8 12.♗e2 ♗e8 13.0-0 ♗f8 14.♗e5 ♘d7 15.b4 ♕e7 16.♗d6 ♕f6 17.f4 ♕h6 18.♗d3 White has the initiative.

4...♘a6 5.a3 Also possible is 5.e3 c5 6.c3 ♗e7 7.♘f3 0-0 8.♗d3 ♗d7, with a playable position.

5...c6 6.♘c3 ♗d6 An alternative is 6...♗e7 7.e3, followed by 8.♘f3 and normal development.

7.e3

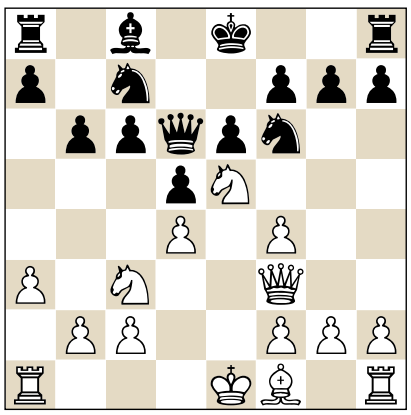


7...♘c7 Maybe Black decides on the position of his knight too early. Interesting was 7...♗xf4 8.exf4 b6 (a stable move. I prefer White's position after both 8...♕c7 9.♕d2 0-0 10.b4 and 8...0-0 9.♗xa6 bxa6 10.♘f3) 9.♘f3 0-0 10.♗d3 c5 11.♘e5 ♗b7 12.0-0 ♘b8, and Black's knight is coming back into the game after ...♘c6 or ...♘bd7.

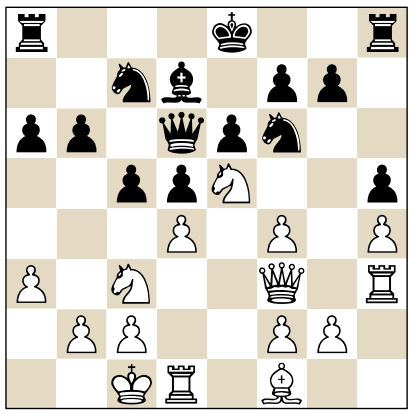
The classical developing move is 7...0-0, when after 8.♗xa6 bxa6 9.♘f3 ♖b8 10.b3 ♗xf4 11.exf4 ♕a5 12.♕d2 c5 13.♘a4 ♕xd2+ 14.♔xd2 cxd4 15.♘xd4 ♘e4+ 16.♔e3 ♗b7 17.f3 ♘d6 the endgame offers White prospects.

8.♘f3 ♗xf4 9.exf4 ♕d6 After 9...0-0 comes the natural 10.♗d3.

10.♘e5 b6 11.♕f3



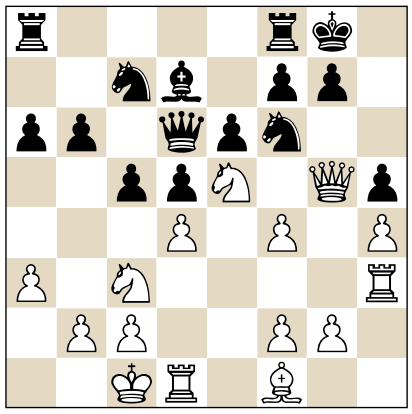
11...c5 If Black were to postpone concrete action (e.g. kingside castling or the text), interesting positions can arise, e.g.: 11...a6. The only safe place for the black king is on the kingside after castling, so why wait: 12.h4!? c5 13.0-0-0 h5 14.♖h3 ♗d7, and now White has to choose which piece to put on the g-file:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

– If 15.♖g3 then 15...0-0 16.♖g5 c4 17.♕g3 ♘ce8 (the best move in the position. A mistake is 17...g6? because of 18.f5! exf5 19.♘xg6 ♕xg3 20.♘e7+ ♔h7 21.fxg3, and White is better) 18.f5 (the best, but not as deadly as before) 18...exf5 19.♘xd7 ♕xd7 20.♕f3 ♘e4 21.♕xf5 ♕xf5 22.♖xf5 ♘xc3 23.bxc3 ♘f6 24.g3 ♖fe8 25.♗g2 ♖ad8, and White still has chances.

– Or the queen: 15.♕g3 0-0 16.♕g5



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

And now Black must to calculate what to do.

– The prophylactic 16...♘ce8 is not so good because of 17.♗e2 cxd4 (after 17...c4 18.♗xh5 b5 19.♗e2 b4 20.axb4 ♕xb4 21.h5 ♖b8 22.h6 g6 23.♖e3 there is no counterplay for Black) 18.♖xd4 ♕c5 19.♖d2 b5 20.f5, and White has an attack!

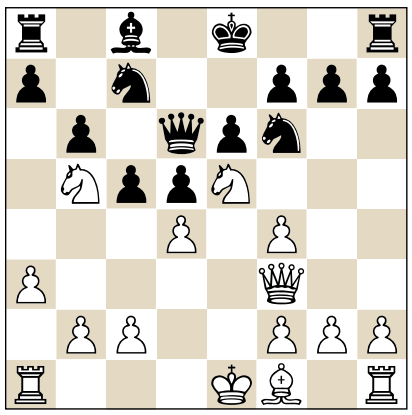
Best performance Board 1

			pts	gms	TPR
1	Baadur Jobava	GEO 2665	8	10	2926
2	Leinier Dominguez	CUB 2720	7½	10	2839
3	Fabiano Caruana	USA 2808	7	10	2838
4	Pentala Harikrishna	IND 2752	5½	9	2831
5	Radoslaw Wojtaszek	POL 2736	7½	10	2808
6	Magnus Carlsen	NOR 2857	7½	10	2805
7	Michael Adams	ENG 2738	6	9	2794
8	Sergey Karjakin	RUS 2769	6	9	2782
9	Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	FRA 2813	6½	9	2775
10	Sergei Zhigalko	BLR 2652	7	10	2774

– Pawn-pushing on the queenside is more attractive: 16...c4 17.♗e2 b5 18.♗xh5 (a simple and forced draw arises after 18.g4 ♘h7 19.♕xh5 ♘f6 20.♕g5 ♘h7) 18...♖ab8 (if 18...a5 then 19.♗e2 ♘h7 20.♕g3 f6 21.♘xd7 ♕xd7 22.h5 b4 23.♘b1 ♘b5 24.h6 ♖f7 25.♗h5 ♖e7 26.♕h4, and White has a strong attack on the black kingside) 19.♘xd7 ♕xd7 20.♗f3 ♘h7 21.♕e5 a5 22.h5 b4 23.axb4 (after 23.♘b1 bxa3 24.♘xa3 c3 25.h6 cxb2+ 26.♔b1 f6 there are chances for both sides) 23...f6 24.♕e3 axb4 25.♘b1, and White's attacking chances are slightly better.

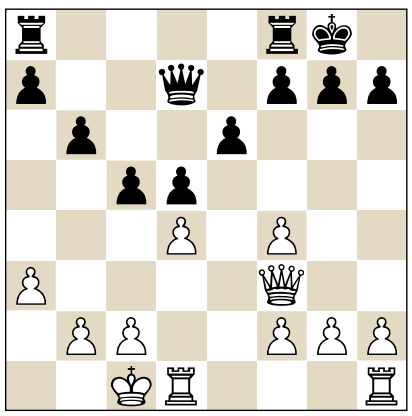
12.♘b5

Now it is too early for 12.0-0-0 because of 12...c4, and Black can start pushing pawns towards the white king.



12...♘xb5 Interesting was 12...♕e7 when after 13.♘xa7 0-0 (13...♖xa7?? 14.♘c6) 14.♘xc8 ♖fxc8 15.♗d3 cxd4 16.0-0 ♘a6 White is slightly better, but Black has good compensation.

13.♗xb5+ ♗d7 14.♘xd7 ♘xd7 15.0-0-0 0-0 16.♗xd7 ♕xd7

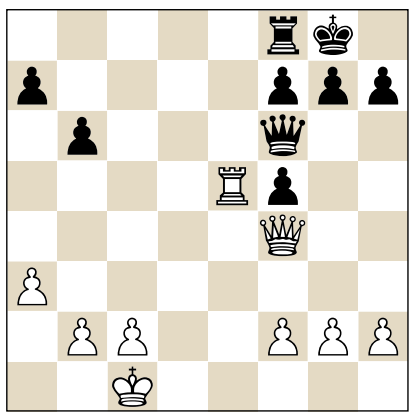


And now we have a battle of the major pieces on the board. As a theme, it featured in many World Championship matches and it has led to many interesting articles. This subject is always attractive to work on and have in a game.

17.f5

The only way to destabilize the black pawn-structure.

17...♕e7 18.♖he1 cxd4 19.♖xd4 ♕f6 20.♕f4 ♖ae8 21.♖e5 exf5 22.♖dxd5 ♖xe5 23.♖xe5



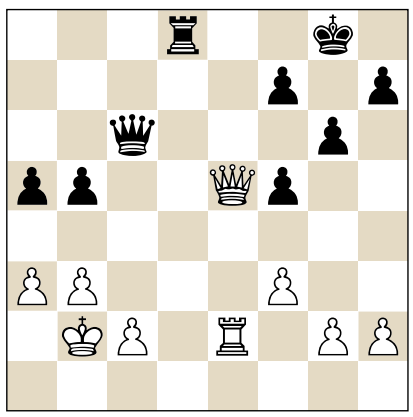
The last few moves haven't changed much, and it was clear we were going to get this pawn structure on the board. The position is still equal, but White has the better chances to progress by trying to create a passed pawn on the queenside.

23...g6 24.♖e2 ♖d8 25.♕e5 ♕c6

The queen swap would not be a big deal, as after 25...♕xe5 26.♖xe5, the rook ending may be even easier for White.

And after 25...♕g5+ 26.f4, the black queen would be somewhat out of play.

26.f3 a5 27.b3 b5 28.♔b2



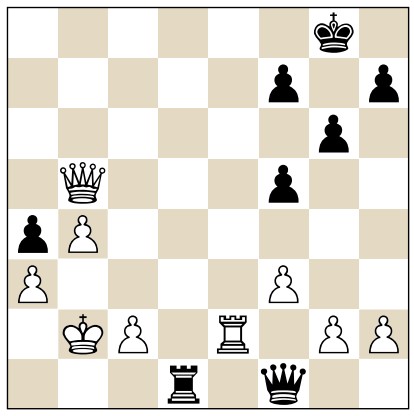
28...a4

If 28...b4 then 29.♕xa5 bxa3+ 30.♔a2 ♕d6 31.h4 ♕d4 32.♕e5 ♕xh4 33.g4 ♕h3 34.gxf5 ♕xf3 35.fxg6 fxg6 36.c4, and the white passed pawns on the queenside are more dangerous.

29.b4 ♕c4?! Interesting was 29...♖c8 30.g4 fxg4 31.fxg4 h6 32.♕d4 ♖e8 33.♖xe8+ ♕xe8.

30.♖e3 ♕f1 30...♖d2 31.♖c3 was only helping White.

31.♖e2 ♖d1 32.♕xb5



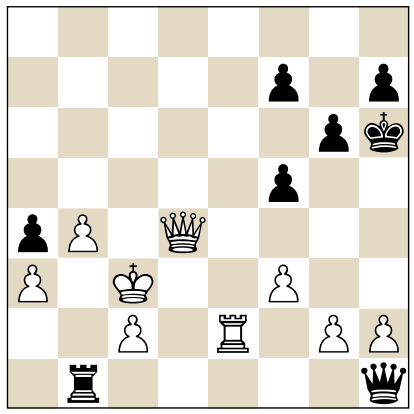
32...♖b1+

To add a few more moves on the score-sheet Black might have gone 32...♔g7 33.♕e5+ ♔h6 34.b5 ♖b1+ 35.♔a2 ♕c1 36.g4 .

33.♔c3 ♔g7 34.♕e5+ ♔h6

If 34...♔g8 White plays 35.♕e8+ ♔g7 36.♖e7, with a mating attack.

35.♕e3+ ♔g7 36.♕f2 ♕h1 37.♕d4+ ♔h6



I could have hunted for a mate here, but being so close to the time-control, I decided to eliminate all chances to blunder and went for a simpler endgame.

38.♖e7 ♕xg2 39.♕d2+ ♕xd2+ 40.♔xd2 ♖a1 41.♖e1 ♖xa3 42.b5

And because he will be unable to stop White's passed b-pawn, Black resigned. ■

Medal winners and brilliancies

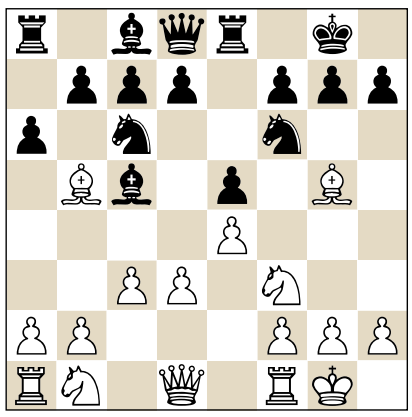
a selection of Olympiad highlights

NOTES BY
Pavel Eljanov

David Navara
Pavel Eljanov
Baku 2016 (10)
Ruy Lopez, Berlin Defence

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.d3 ♗c5 5.c3 0-0 6.0-0 ♖e8 7.♗g5 a6!?

The normal move here is 7...h6, although it could transpose to the same position we got in the game.



8.♗c4!?

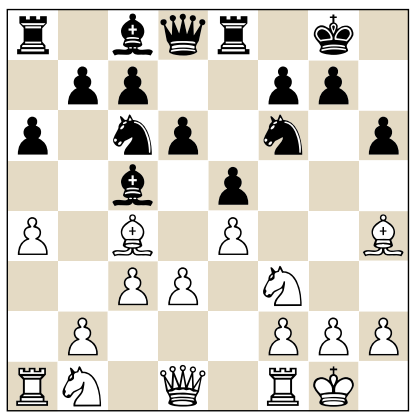
A very interesting concept. Instead of going back with 8.♗a4, White transposes to the Giuoco Piano with the extra move ...♖e8. But it looks as if this rook move would favour White.

8...h6 9.♗h4 d6

Here the normal and typical reaction would be 9...♗e7, but after 10.a4 d6 11.♘a3 ♘h5 12.♗g3! White is ready to open the f-file in the event of ...♘xg3, when the rook on e8 is very much misplaced.

It was also dangerous to push forward immediately, since after 9... g5 10.♗g3 g4 White has a pleasant choice between 11.d4!? and 11.♘fd2.

10.a4



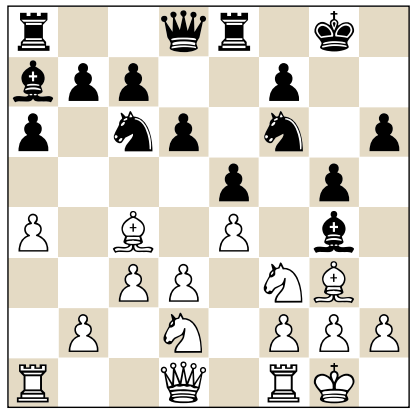
10...g5

My first intention was to play 10...♕e7 11.♘bd2 ♗e6, with a pretty solid position of course, but White has some initiative in any case after 12.b4 ♗a7 13.♖e1 ♗xc4 14.♘xc4 ♕e6 15.b5 ♘e7 16.♗xf6 ♕xf6 17.♖b1.

11.♗g3 ♗a7

After 11...g4 White has the strong reply 12.♗h4!.

12.♘bd2 ♗g4



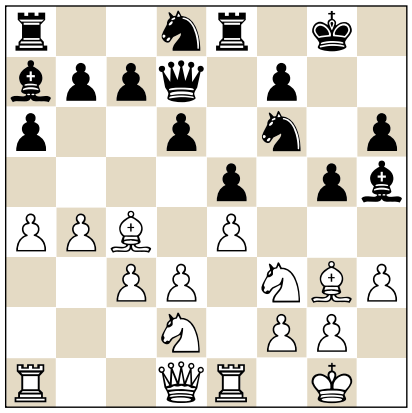
I was happy to play this, because I had already tried this plan against Giri in a similar situation in Stavanger at Norway Chess 2016. Now I have two ideas for the price of one: my bishop is not only pinning White's knight, but will also cover the very important g6- and f7-squares.

13.h3 ♗h5 14.♖e1 ♕d7 15.b4

Maybe it was more to the point to start the typical knight transfer 15.♘f1 ♘e7, and now 16.♗h2!, when White is probably slightly better in this complicated position.

15...♘d8!

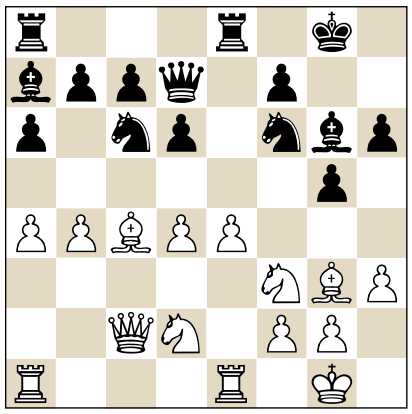
Now I'm in time and have decent counterplay.



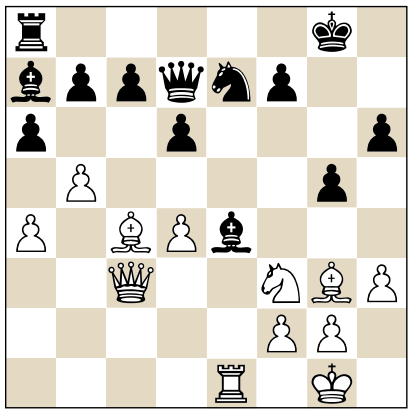
16.d4 Interesting, but not necessary. After 16.a5 ♘e6 17.♗b3 c6 the position is unclear. **16...exd4 17.♕c2 ♗g6** Also interesting was 17...♘c6!?. **18.cxd4 ♘c6** Here I was optimistic because I didn't see how White would get full compensation for one of the pawns that I will capture eventually. But David found a strong move sequence.

MARIA EMELIANOVA

Ukraine's first board Pavel Eljanov certainly had a point when he said: 'We were close and, I believe, also deserved gold, the same as USA, but the "stars" decided otherwise.'

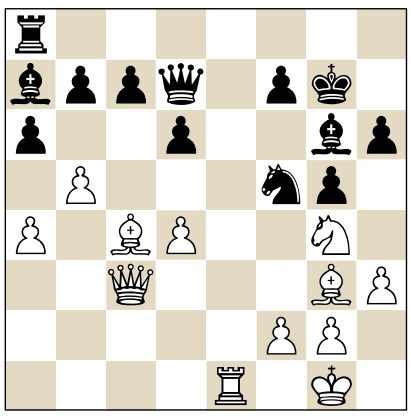


19.♕c3! After 19.d5 ♘xb4 20.♕c3 ♘h5! favours Black.
19...♘xe4 20.♘xe4 ♖xe4 21.b5 ♘e7 22.♖xe4 ♗xe4 23.♖e1
23.bxa6 bxa6 24.♗xa6? runs into 24...♕c6, and Black is clearly better.

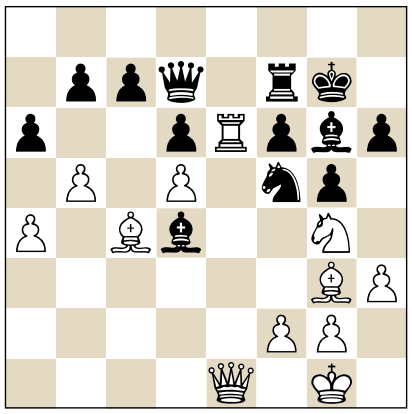


23...♗g6! Avoiding 23...♘d5 24.♕b3 ♘f6 25.bxa6 bxa6 26.♖xe4! ♘xe4 27.♕b7, which is fine for White.

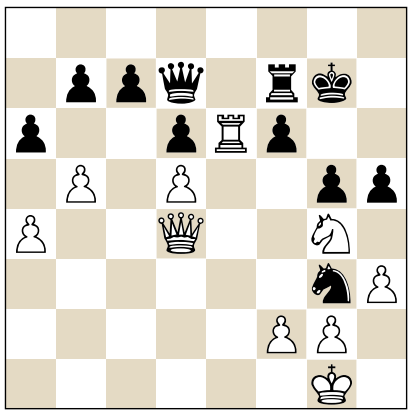
24.♘h2?!
Not a big mistake, but the first step in the wrong direction.
White would still have enough compensation after 24.bxa6 bxa6 25.a5 .
24...♘f5 25.♘g4 ♔g7



26.♖e4?
But now the must-play move was 26.♗d3! ♖f8 27.♗xf5 ♗xf5 28.bxa6 bxa6 29.♘e3 ♗e4, with some compensation for the pawn deficit, but White already has to prove it.
26...♖f8! 27.d5+ f6
Now all my pieces are very well placed and after a quick counter-attack everything comes to an end.
28.♖e6 ♗d4 29.♕e1 ♖f7



30.♗d3 White's position is also lost after 30.♘e3 ♗xe3 31.fxe3 ♘xg3 32.♕xg3 ♖f8.
30...♘xg3 31.♗xg6 ♔xg6 32.♕b1+ ♔g7 33.♕d3 h5 34.♕xd4



34...♕xe6! A nice final touch.
35.dxe6 ♘e2+ White resigned.

NOTES BY
Andrei Volokitin

Alexander Grischuk
Andrei Volokitin
Baku 2016 (4)
Grünfeld Indian, Fianchetto

When I came up to the board, Alexander was sitting in a track suit, his head covered by a hood. When I bent down and looked him in the eye, he was unexpectedly asleep! This was an unusual start to the game.

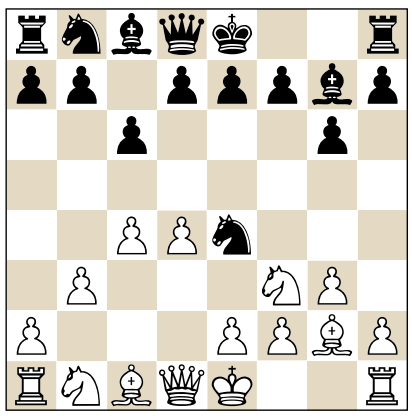
1.♘f3

It was not easy to guess what my opponent's training camp would prepare. Our team trainer Alexander Sulypa and I had to be ready for any first move by the opponent. Nevertheless, for some reason we were expecting a symmetrical Grünfeld after the moves 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c6 and it can be said that we guessed right! With a transposition of moves that is what we obtained.

1...♘f6 2.g3 g6 3.♗g2 ♗g7 4.c4 c6 5.b3

Alexander tries to obtain a position from the recent game Aronian-Carlsen, Stavanger 2016, but I do not allow him this possibility!

5...♘e4 6.d4



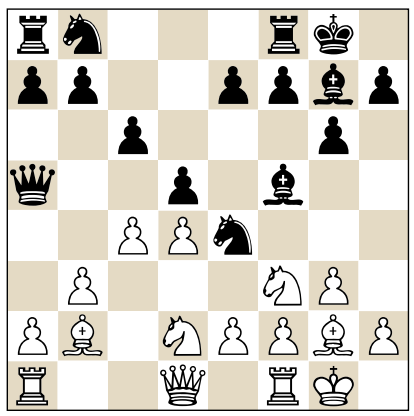
6...d5

Transposing into a symmetrical Grünfeld. In the distant 2007 I once played here 6...♕a5+ 7.♘bd2 c5?? and after 8.b4! Black was in trouble, Tkachiev-Volokitin, Dresden 2007.

7.0-0 0-0

A position with the move b3 has been reached. White has avoided the critical variation with ...dxc4 and ...c5, but on the other hand in my opinion the position after ...♘e4 is also very sound for Black.

8.♗b2 ♗f5 9.♘bd2 ♕a5



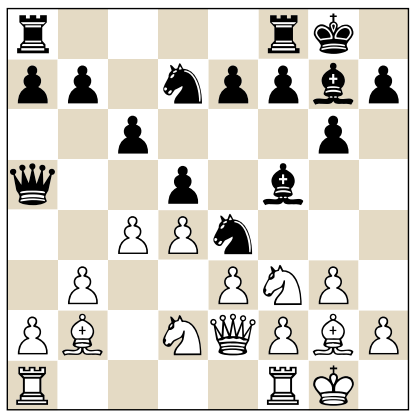
This move has the idea of preventing ♘h4. It is surprising, but I had this position on the board in my room when preparing for the game!

10.e3

Alexander makes a scheduled, solid move. During the preparations Anton Korobov came into my room, looked at the position and suggested 10.a3, with the idea of seizing space on the queenside, and also preparing ♖c1. After this I was intending to play 10...♘d7 11.b4 ♕d8, with a solid, playable position.

10...♘d7 11.♕e2

It was only at this moment that my preparation concluded and I had a serious think. At this point Alexander had roughly 54 minutes left, while I had 1 hour 23 minutes, but on my next move I thought for about 38 minutes!



11...♖fe8

I will endeavour to explain what I spent my time on.

– First of all I examined the knight move 11...♘c3. This attack does not work on account of the simple 12.♕e1!, when in view of the pin and the threat of ♘b1 Black does best to bring his knight back.

– 11...♘ec5?! I rejected this flamboyant move because of the simple 12.♘e1!.

The move 11...♘xd2 seemed to me to be a concession: after 12.♕xd2 I did not want to go into a passive endgame.

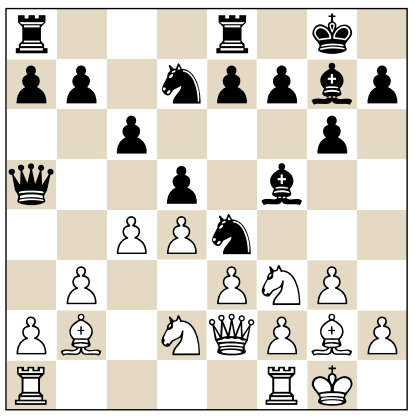
– 11...♘dc5. I discarded this pretty move on account of 12.♘xe4, when Black is forced to take on e4 with his knight, although in such positions it is better to take on e4 with the bishop. 12...♘xe4 13.♘e5, with some pressure for White.

– 11...♘df6. This solid move was quite possible, but I did not make it, because I was more attracted by the idea of advancing ...e5.

– 11...♖fd8. I also considered this move, but after 12.♖fc1 I did not like the lack of any concrete ideas after ...♖fd8.

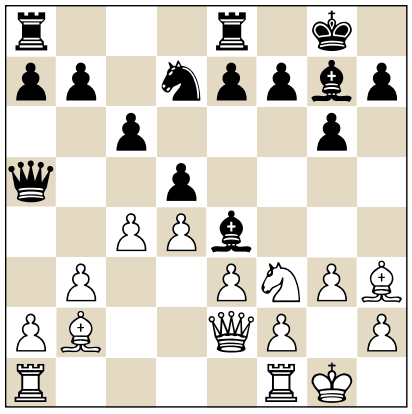
– 11...e5?!. I even considered this concrete move during the game, but I sensed that I was not yet prepared for such a move... 12.cxd5 cxd5 (after 12...exd4? 13.♘c4 White has a strong initiative) 13.♘xe4 dxe4 14.♘h4 exd4 15.exd4 ♖fe8 16.♘xf5 ♕xf5 17.♖fe1 ♘f6 18.♖ac1 with advantage to White.

Thus the move 11...♖fe8 was conceived.

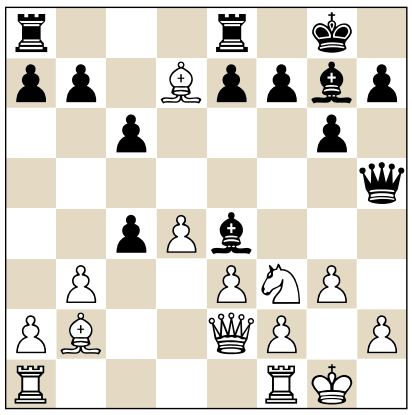


12.♘xe4 After the waiting move 12.♖fc1!? Black can gradually equalize with the planned 12...e5!?.

12...♗xe4 13.♗h3
The natural reaction, which I had to foresee when making my eleventh move. After making this move it was obvious that Alexander was happy with his position.



13...dxc4!! It was this unexpected idea that I had in mind when making my eleventh move. Black temporarily sacrifices a piece and switches his queen to the kingside, creating a pin. This move sharply changes the pattern of the play. With best play by both sides Black sacrifices a pawn, obtaining sufficient compensation in return in the form of his better development and White's bad pawn structure. White becomes the defending side, and Black obtains a long-term initiative. It is for this psychological effect that I have given the two exclamation marks.
14.♗xd7 Forced, since otherwise 14...♕h5 or 14...♗d3.
14...♕h5

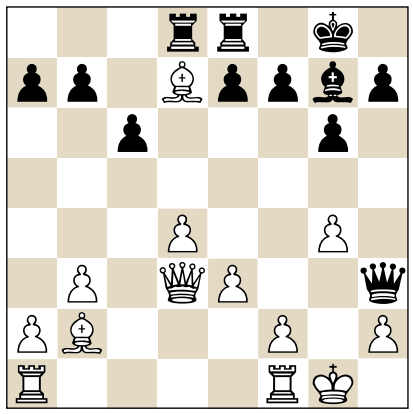


15.g4! Again the best decision.
I very much liked the cooperative variation which I saw during the game: 15.♔g2?? ♖ed8 16.♗h3 ♖d6! and Black wins.

MARIA EMELIANOVA

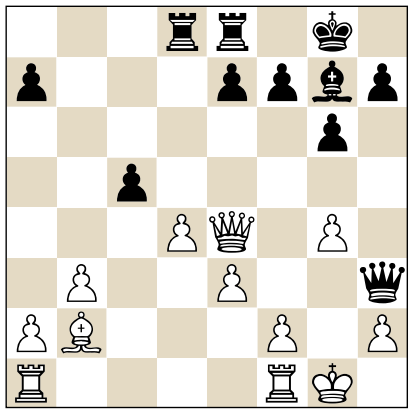
Andrei Volokitin and Ukraine's captain Alexander Sulypa. The winner of the gold medal on Board 4 was the best player of the Baku Olympiad with an incredible 2992 performance.

15.♗xe8? is also bad: 15...♗xf3 16.♕xc4 (after 16.♗xf7+ ♔h8 White has to give up his queen – 17.♕xf3 ♕xf3 18.♗xc4 h5!, with advantage to Black) 16...♖xe8. Here I simply assessed the position, not calculating any further. With such a bishop on f3 only Black can play for a win.
15...♕h3 16.♘e1 ♗d3 17.♘xd3 cxd3 18.♕xd3 ♖ad8
Up till now both sides have made the best and only moves. On the 19th move White had a choice of various continuations...



19.♗xc6 It was this move that I expected. As a matter of principle White grabs a pawn. 19.♗e6 fxe6 20.♕e4 did not look dangerous for Black. After this I was planning to play 20...♔f7 with the idea of ...♖d5, but as it transpired in analysis, the initiative-seizing 20...♖f8! with the idea of playing ...♖f3 is stronger. Black has good play, since it is dangerous to grab the pawn on e6 – 21.♕xe6+ ♖f7 intending 22.♕e4? ♖f3.
Taking account of the situation at that moment in the match – Eljanov had an advantage against Kramnik, Ponomariov stood worse against Tomashevsky and Korobov was already playing with an open king – in my view the most practical decision would have been to take the rook and force a draw after 19.♗xe8 ♕xg4+ 20.♔h1 ♕f3+.
True, I am sure that before the game there was a clear directive on the 4th board, to try and exploit the white pieces, and the catastrophic score in my individual meetings with Grischuk should also be taken into account, and therefore for me his decision to continue playing was predictable.
19...bxc6 20.♕e4 c5!
Correctly played. During the game I also calculated some pretty varia-

tions involving ...e5, which, unfortunately, do not work: 20...e5? 21.dxe5 ♖d2 22.♗c3 ♖c2 23.♖ac1 and here 23...♖xc3? 24.♖xc3 ♗xe5 does not work because of 25.f4!, when, because the rook on e8 is undefended, White wins.

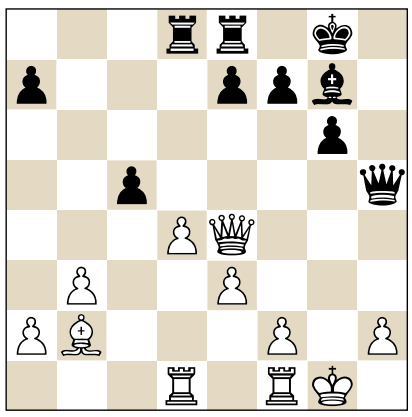


21.♖ad1 A solid move. White does not want to create an isolated pawn on d4.

21...h5! Immediately latching on to White's weaknesses.

22.gxh5?! From this point Alexander begins to lose the thread of the game and to make mistakes. I think that here he should have psychologically readjusted and played strictly for a draw, for example, by 22.♗a1!? cxd4 23.♗xd4 ♗xd4 24.♖xd4 ♖xd4 25.♕xd4 ♖c8! 26.gxh5 ♖c5!?.

22...♕xh5



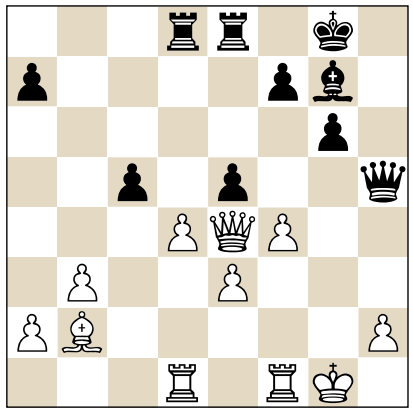
23.f4?

A completely unexpected, incorrect move. I think that the cause of the mistake was that Alexander did not readjust in time to playing for a draw. White's position is now strategically rather unpleasant – open king, many pawn weaknesses, and the initiative with Black. He should have played more solidly: 23.f3! (with the idea of capturing on d4 with the bishop) 23...e6 24.♗a1. Here Black has many possibilities, and he has the initiative, but with correct play by both sides the game should end in a draw.

23...♕e2

After making this move almost without thinking, I was convinced that my opponent had missed something, since now White in any case loses a pawn. I no longer had time to find the strongest move, since I only had about 16 minutes left to the end of the game.

23...e5! is a pretty move, which I saw only after the game. Now White has two possibilities:



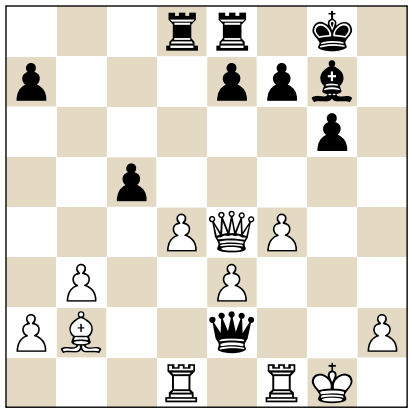
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) The first is to exchange queens: 24.♕f3 ♕xf3 25.♖xf3 exf4 26.exf4 cxd4 27.♔f2 f5 with the idea of ...♖e4 and ...♗f6, with an unpleasant endgame for White;

B) 24.fxe5! (the best continuation) 24...♗xe5 25.♕g2 and here by finding the only moves White saves himself in all variations.

Best performance Board 4

			pts	gms	TPR
1 **Andrei Volokitin**	UKR	2647	8½	9	2992
2 **Sami Khader**	JOR	2373	8	8	2932
3 **Aleksej Aleksandrov**	BLR	2547	6½	8	2760
4 **Eltaj Safarli**	AZE	2688	5½	7	2747
5 **Stelios Halkias**	GRE	2565	7	9	2739
6 **Eric Hansen**	CAN	2582	9	11	2738
7 **Alexander Grischuk**	RUS	2754	6½	9	2719
8 **Nigel Short**	ENG	2666	6½	9	2681
9 **Serghei Vedmediuc**	MDA	2437	6	7	2669
10 **Sam Shankland**	USA	2679	5½	8	2661



24.♗a1?

And this move can be called the decisive mistake. At roughly this moment Ian Nepomniachtchi defeated Anton Korobov and, what is interesting, although Alexander had only a few minutes on his clock, with him to move he found time to congratulate his team colleague!

The best move was the by no means obvious 24.♗c1! with the idea of 24...cxd4 25.♖d2!. Now in the endgame White has no problems: 25...♕xe3+ 26.♕xe3 dxe3 27.♖xd8 ♖xd8 28.♗xe3 ♗d4 29.♔f2.

24...cxd4! Now Black should win.

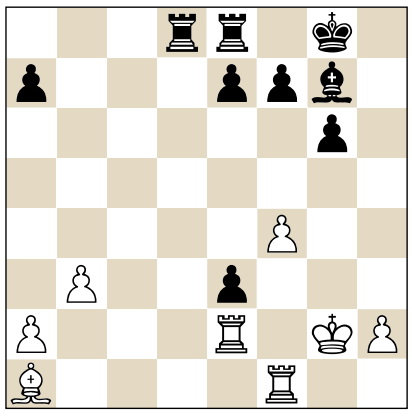
25.♖de1

Bad, of course, was 25.♗xd4 ♖xd4 26.♖xd4 ♗xd4 27.♕xd4 ♖c8! 28.♕d1 ♕xe3+ 29.♔h1 ♖c3 30.♕e1 ♕d3.

25...♕g4+ 26.♕g2 ♕xg2+ 27.♔xg2 dxe3 28.♖e2

After 28.♗xg7 there is the important intermediate check 28...♖d2+!.

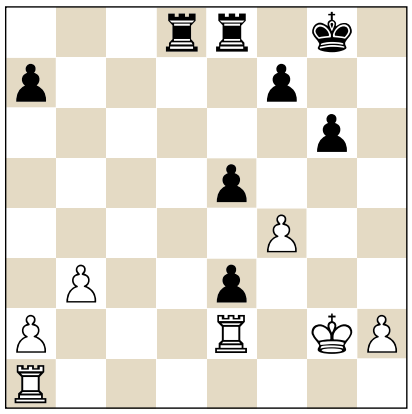
Here I thought for roughly 10 of my remaining 12 minutes, looking for the most accurate way to convert my advantage, but I made a serious mistake.



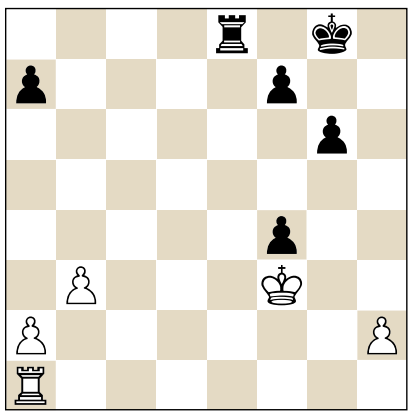
28...♗xa1? The move that suggests itself, 28...♖d2, did not seem so

convincing to me during the game. Analysis did not show a clear win for Black, but also I did not find a clear draw for White. From the practical point of view, in my view Black's chances of winning are better than White's of drawing.

29.♖xa1 e5



30.fxe5? A mistake in reply. The only way of exploiting the chance was by 30.♖xe3! exf4 31.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 32.♔f3 and now:



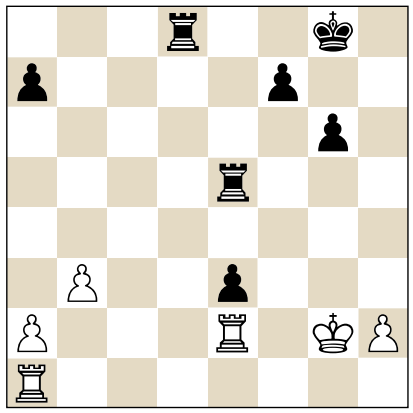
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 32...g5? does not present any danger after 33.♔g4 ♖e2 34.♔xg5 f3 35.♔g4 f2 36.♖f1 ♖xa2 37.♔g3 ♖b2 38.♔g2! ♖xb3 39.♖a1;

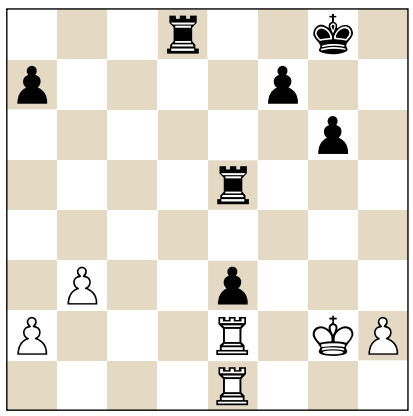
B) Interesting is 32...♖d8 33.♔xf4 ♖d2 34.h4 ♔g7 35.h5! (White wants to obtain a theoretically drawn endgame against f- and h-pawns) 35...gxh5 36.♔g5 ♖h2 37.a4 f6+ 38.♔f4 ♖f2+ 39.♔g3 ♖b2 40.♔h4 ♖xb3 41.♔xh5. In theory White should be able to hold on here;

C) 32...♔g7! is the strongest, after which to gain a draw White has to produce a series of study-like moves. In practice this is very difficult: 33.h4! (the only move, after which I have not found a win; bad is 33.♔xf4? ♖e2 34.h4 ♔h6) 33...♔h6 34.♖c1 f5 35.♖c7 ♖e3+ 36.♔xf4 ♖h3 37.♖xa7 ♖xh4+ 38.♔e5! ♖e4+ 39.♔d5 g5 40.♖f7 ♔g6 41.♖f8 g4 42.a4 ♖e7 43.♖g8+ ♔h5 44.♔d6! with a draw.

30...♖xe5



31.♖ae1 More resilient was 31.♔f3! ♖h5 32.♖h1 ♖e8 33.h3 ♖f5+ 34.♔g3 ♖e6! 35.♖he1 ♖ef6!, when Black should gradually win.



31...♔g7 White is unable to capture the e3-pawn without losing his pawns, so his position is hopeless.

32.♔g3

32.♖xe3 ♖d2+ 33.♔g3 ♖g5+! 34.♔f4 ♖f5+ 35.♔g3 ♖xa2, and wins.

32...♖de8 33.h3 f5! 34.♔f3 ♖h8 35.♔g3 g5! 36.♖h2 f4+ 37.♔f3 ♔f6 38.♖c1 ♔f5 White resigned.

A very important victory! When I won, I merely equalized the score, but then Ruslan Ponomariov also won. As a result we defeated the Olympiad rating favourites by the minimal score. It was very pleasant when the Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko congratulated us on Twitter.

Celeb 64

John Henderson

Mark Rylance

Back in 1991, in the BBC film *The Grass Arena*, Mark Rylance played John Healy, the alcoholic boxer and petty criminal whose life is transformed when he learns to play chess in prison. This was Rylance's breakthrough performance, and it was a role he totally immersed himself in – even learning to play chess. From that moment, chess became his 'good luck' charm.

A quarter of a century later, Rylance won the Oscar (for best supporting actor in *Bridge of Spies*, the most recent Tom Hanks vehicle). And in one of the key prison scenes, as the tension mounts between the two, in the background there can be seen two prison guards haunched over a chessboard. It was there at Rylance's request.

Similarly, Rylance won critical acclaim for his portrayal of the deep-thinking, ever-scheming Thomas Cromwell in the BBC production of Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall*. Rylance likened his character in the media to a chess grandmaster who sees many moves ahead of others – and indeed, in all the key scenes in Cromwell's study, there was always a strategically placed chess set for him to use as a play prop.

But this is nothing to his early 2000s performance in *The Tempest* at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. It was a small production, where Rylance improvised the entire storm scene with the ship and everyone on it, using only a chess board. It was said to be hilarious, fascinating and moving all at the same time. ■

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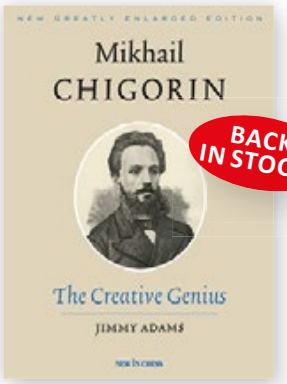

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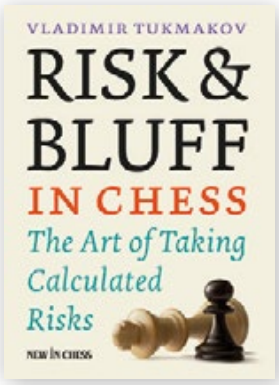

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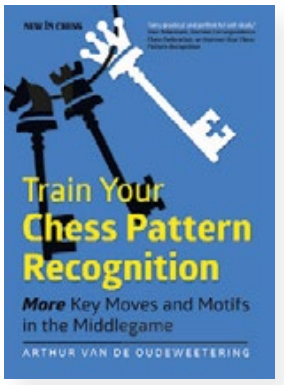

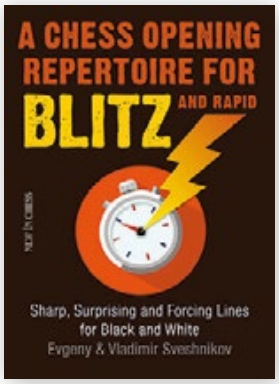
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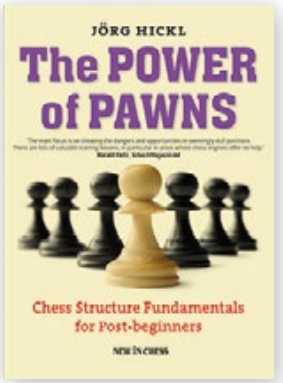

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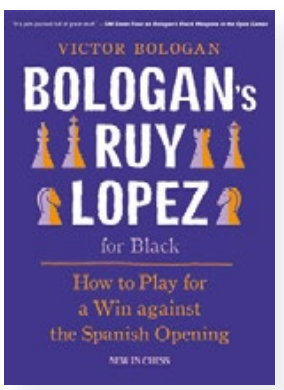

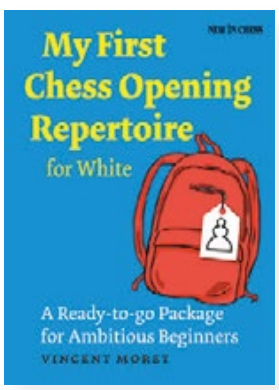

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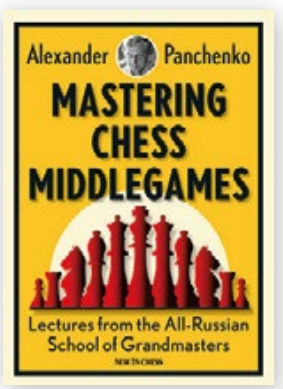

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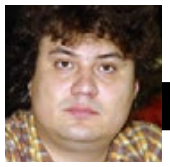
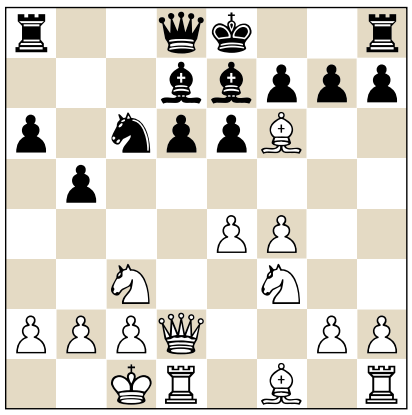


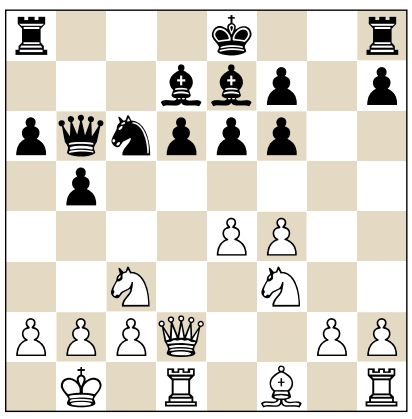
NOTES BY
Anton Korobov

S.P. Sethuraman
Anton Korobov
Baku 2016 (9)
Sicilian, Richter-Rauzer

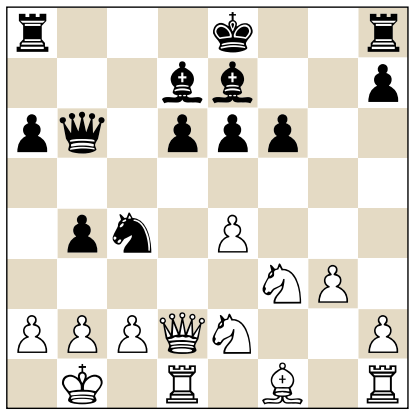
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘c6
The main criterion in my choice of opening was my opponent's limited experience. In my preparations the decision was taken to play as audaciously as possible and from the very first moves to adopt an aggressive approach.
6.♗g5 e6 7.♕d2 a6 8.0-0-0 ♗d7 9.f4 ♗e7 10.♘f3 b5 11.♗xf6



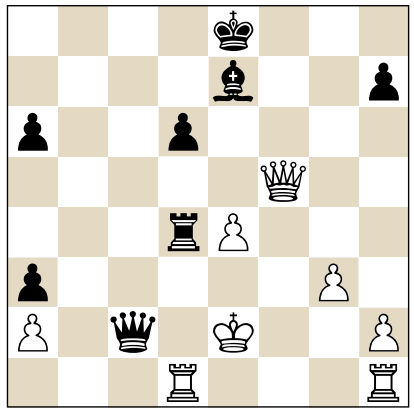
The first fruit of the correct opening choice. Compared with the Panchenko Variation – 9...b5 10.♗xf6 gxf6 11.♘xc6 ♗xc6 12.♗d3 – an additional pair of knights remains on the board, affording Black a greater number of constructive ideas in the subsequent play.
11...gxf6 12.♔b1 ♕b6



13.g3
White's main strategic idea is to attack the e6-point, with the aim of provoking a favourable change in the pawn structure. With this aim, 13.f5! is very logical and strong. It is not easy to put forward arguments after 13...b4! 14.♘e2 ♕f2 15.♘fg1!!.
13...♘a5!?
A move in accordance with the chosen tactics. Generally speaking, classical manuals do not recommend initiating a conflict without first completing the mobilization of the forces (especially with Black!), but here the smell of blood is clearly felt. Black is ready for a series of attacking moves: ...b4, ...♘c4, followed by ...♘a3. It is time to discard false modesty.
14.f5 b4 15.fxe6 fxe6 16.♘e2 ♘c4

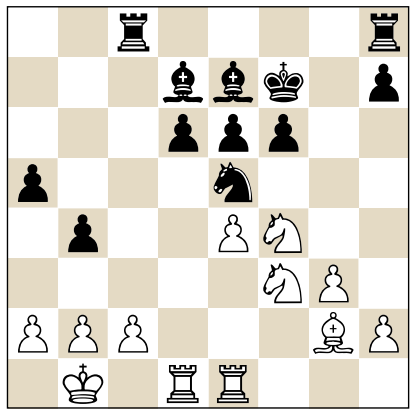


17.♕d4?!
White caves in. He takes the opponent at his word, although in the event of the critical 17.♕h6! he would have invited Black to demonstrate what compensation he had (and, apparently, it is insufficient) for the sacrificed piece: 17...♘a3+!. It is already too late to sound the retreat. With his king stuck on e8 and his rooks disconnected, it is time for Black to forget generally-accepted rules and to try and attack with those forces which he has available. During the game I was not in fact able to work out the variations, but I trusted that there would be a knock-out. 18.bxa3 bxa3+ 19.♔c1 ♖c8 20.♔d2 (20.♖d2 – Initially this move frightened me more than the prospect of paying alimony, but after 20...♕b2+ 21.♔d1 ♕xa2 the presence of the expensive passed a3-pawn instils great financial potential in Black's position) 20...♕b4+ 21.♔e3 ♕c5+ 22.♘ed4 e5 23.♗h3! ♗xh3 24.♕xh3 f5 25.♕xf5 ♖f8 26.♕e6 ♖b8!, and in a practical game it is obvious that three results are possible. However, the soulless automaton promises White an advantage after 27.♔d3 exd4 28.♘xd4 ♖b4 29.♘f5!! ♖xf5 30.♕xf5 ♖d4+ 31.♔e2 ♕xc2+



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

32.♔e3!! (it is not easy to calculate as far as such geometry!) 32...♖xd1 33.♕h5+ ♔d7 34.♕xd1.
17...♕xd4 18.♖xd4
The capture with either of the knights would have allowed Black the advantage of the two bishops in classical form after 18...♘e3.
18...♘e5
After the exchange of queens the dynamic potential has been sharply reduced, which is to Black's advantage. It is time for White to forget about aggressive intentions and adjust to the opponent's actions.
19.♗g2 a5 20.♖e1 ♖c8 21.♖dd1 ♔f7 22.♘f4



22...♘g6!

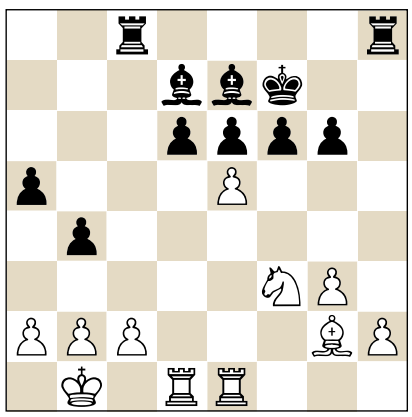
S.P. Sethuraman congratulates Anton Korobov on a win that was not only the fruit of exploited technical mistakes, but also of clever psychological gambles.

The correct conception! Black forces the opponent to come to a decision: either retreat, or allow a transformation of the pawn structure favourable for Black.

23.♘xg6! A non-trivial approach: White himself opens up the position, despite his opponent possessing the two bishops. The play revolves around one factor: the presence of the black king in the centre – is this an advantage or a drawback? In the endgame it is recommended to keep the king in the centre, but here the position has not yet lost its middlegame features and the king comes under attack.

If 23.♘d3 there follows 23...♖c7, and Black can endlessly strengthen his position with moves such as ...♖hc8, ...♗f8-h6 and ...♔e7.

23...hxg6 24.e5!

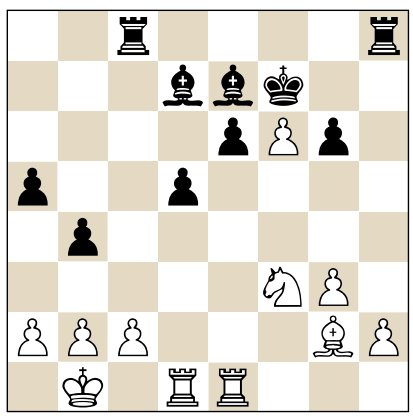


24...d5?! An incorrect evaluation of the position. I was under the illusion that I already held a big positional advantage. All that remained was to obtain stability, and the two bishops would have their weighty say. But in fact the position is a very concrete one, and the way to an advantage lies via the positional pawn sacrifice 24...♖hd8!, and now:

A) 25.exd6 ♗f8. Compared with the game Black has retained a three-day stubble in the form of the g6-, f6- and e6-pawns, which seriously restrict the white knight and do not allow it to come close to the black forces. The d6-pawn is in fact a weakness and it should soon be lost.

B) 25.exf6 ♗xf6 26.♖xd6 ♗a4! 27.♖xd8 ♗xc2+ 28.♔c1 ♗xd8 29.♔d2 ♗f5 30.♖c1 ♖xc1 31.♔xc1 ♔f6, and White faces a difficult defence. It is important for Black not to allow a transposition into an ending with opposite-colour bishops, and then he will be able to endlessly torment his opponent in this position.

25.exf6

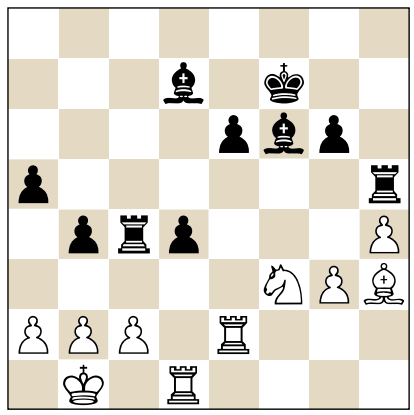


25...♗xf6?! Here also it was better to refrain from the immediate regaining of the material – 25...♗d6!, and here White would have to make a series of only moves: 26.♖f1 ♔xf6 27.♗h3! ♗b5 28.♗xe6 ♗xf1 29.♗xc8 ♗e2 30.♖xd5 ♗xg3 31.♗g4! ♗xh2 32.a3 bxa3 33.♘xh2 ♖xh2 34.♗xe2 ♖xe2 35.♖xa5, gaining a draw.

26.h4 ♖h5 Objectively, this is a move in the wrong direction. Black wants to retain the two bishops and defend against the check on e5. However, such an obvious striving to retain the advantages of the position could have led to the loss even of equality. Here I realized that in this game I would not be able to manage without an exchange sacrifice on f5. And this prophecy came true!

27.♗h3 ♖c4 28.♖e3 Here, for the first time in the game, I experienced a feeling of chilling horror – the opponent is preparing to put pressure on me at a sore point, which I had thought was healthy. What to do...?

28...d4!? The path to victory lies via complete loss of control. **29.♖e2**



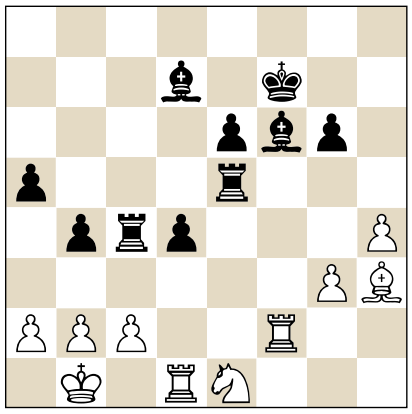
29...♖hc5? The first real chess mistake. Now the rook on c4 has no moves and it comes under all sorts of attacks. 29...♖c7! was much stronger. The tactical justification is 30.♘xd4?? e5!, and Black remains a piece up.

30.♘e1?! 30.♖f2! was much more forceful, aiming with the rook at the king and vacating the diagonal

for the bishop: 30...♔e7 31.♗f1 d3 32.♗xd3 ♖g4.

30...♖e5 An exchange of rooks certainly comes into Black's plans, since with an exchange of pieces his central pawns immediately acquire mobility.

31.♖f2



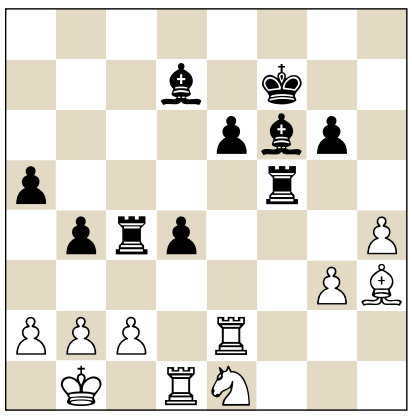
31...♖f5!!??

The dream is realized! I made this move with a 'firm hand' and with a confident air I began pacing around the board. My confident air obviously unsettled my opponent. At any event, I gained the impression that he did not even consider winning the exchange.

32.♖e2?

The same psychological mistake as on the 17th move. White does not display the required decisiveness and goes along with his opponent.

And yet winning material would evidently have led also the winning of the game: 32.♗xf5 gxf5 33.g4! e5 34.♘f3! e4 35.♘d2! ♖c5 36.♘xe4! fxe4 37.♖df1 ♗xg4 38.♖xf6+ ♔e7 39.♖6f4 ♗f3 40.♖e1 and wins.



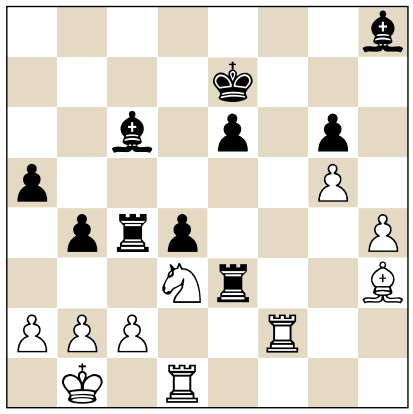
32...♗c6!

To remove the rook from the attack is pointless: the opponent is not intending to take it. The rejection of the sacrifice gave me a considerable psychological boost, and I began playing increasingly confidently.

33.g4

The remainder of the game took part in a time scramble.

33...♖e5 34.♖f2 ♔e7 35.g5 ♗h8 36.♘d3 ♖e3

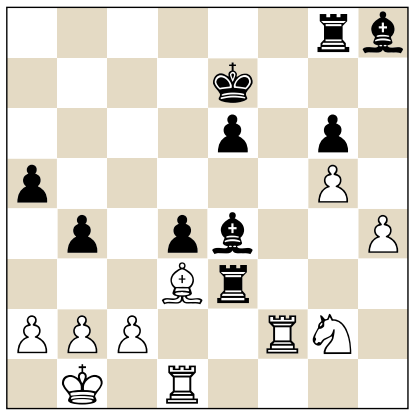


37.♗f1?

37.♘f4! ♔d6 38.♗g2 ♗e8 39.♗f3! was stronger, when Black appears to have no normal ways of improving his position. Apparently he would have had to make use of a tested device – an exchange sacrifice: 39...♖c8 40.♘g2 ♖xf3 41.♖xf3 ♗c6 42.♖f2 e5 43.♖df1 ♔e6, when all three results are possible.

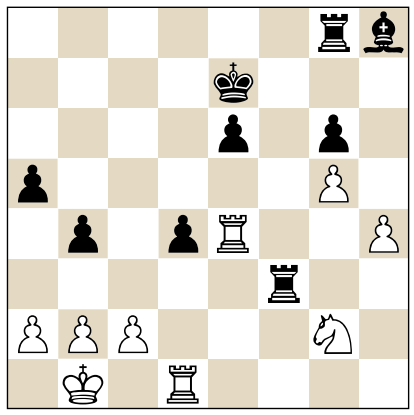
37...♗e4 38.♘f4 ♖c8 39.♗d3 ♖g8 40.♘g2

Another inaccuracy, this time on the 40th move. White's striving for clarity results in him losing the coordination of his pieces.



40...♖f3! The smoke has cleared, and the waves have died down. Black has obviously been successful, and his audacious approach has triumphed: White is lost.

41.♖e2 ♗d5 42.♗e4 ♗xe4 43.♖xe4



43...♔d6!

Black's plan is simple: with the support of his king (for whom a brilliant career is now in prospect, in contrast to his white opponent) he sets about advancing his central pawns. White's downfall is caused by the bad position of his knight and the lack of real living space for his king.

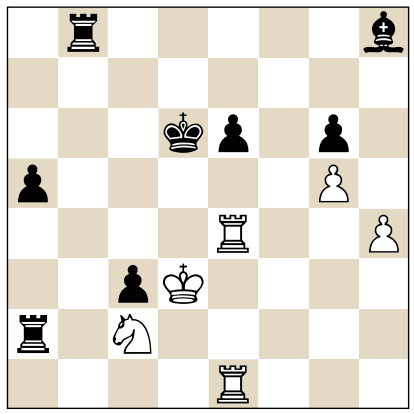
44.♘e1 ♖f1 45.c3

Agony.

45...bxc3 46.bxc3 ♖b8+ 47.♔c2 ♖f2+ 48.♔d3 ♖xa2 49.♘c2

If 49.cxd4 there follows 49...♖b3+ 50.♔c4 ♖aa3 with an aesthetic finish.

49...dxc3 50.♖de1



50...♖d8! An ambush.

51.♖1e2 ♔c5+ 52.♔e3 ♖d6 53.♖h2 ♗g7 54.h5 gxh5 55.♖eh4 ♖d5 56.♖xh5 ♔c4 57.♖h7 ♖xg5 58.♔e4 ♔b3 59.♖xg7

Pre-death convulsions.

59...♖xg7 60.♘d4+ ♔a3 61.♘b5+ ♔b4 White resigned.

(PS: I would like to thank my friend National Master Alexey Yarovinsky for his assistance in writing the text and for his fantastic creativity!)

NOTES BY
Vladimir Kramnik

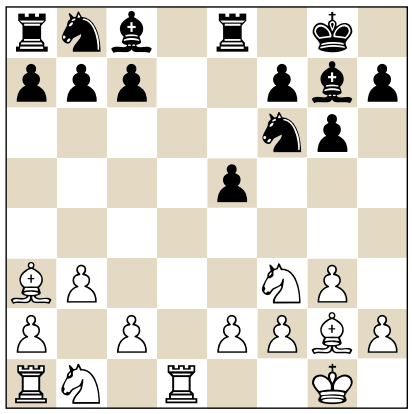
Vladimir Kramnik
Daniele Vocaturo
Baku 2016 (11)
King's Indian, Double Fianchetto

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6

The last round at Olympiads always begins earlier, which is a difficult test for a person with my daily regime, and in addition there is little time for preparation. Looking through my opponent's games, I saw that in the position after White's 5th move he does not play ...d7-d5. This was a sufficient justification for choosing the given line.

How many games on the theme of 5...d5 have I had over the past six months!... If all the rapid and blitz games are counted, there must have been about ten. And although on the whole the results were good, I was already tired of these positions. But 5...d6 always means a battle. I repeated my notes on the system with b2-b3, and at that my preparation essentially concluded.

6.b3 e5 7.dxe5 dxe5 8.♗a3 ♕xd1 9.♖xd1 ♖e8



10.c4

Fortunately, before the game I had time to see in my notes that this move was one deserving attention. Analysing the game, to my enormous surprise I discovered that I had already played this position, and, moreover, quite recently. True, it was a blitz game, and I do not exactly remember the move order, but in this position I played 10.♘c3. There followed 10...a6 11.e4 ♘c6 12.♘d5 ♘xd5 13.exd5 e4 14.dxc6 ♗xa1 15.♘g5 ♗g7 16.♗xe4 bxc6 17.♗xc6 ♗g4 18.f3 ♗f5 19.♗xa8 ♖xa8 20.♘e4 a5 21.♗e7 a4 22.bxa4 ♗e6 23.a5 ♗xa2 24.♖d8+ ♖xd8 25.♗xd8 ♗d4+ 26.♔g2 ♗b1 27.♗xc7 ♗xc2 28.♗b6 ♗e5 29.a6 ♗b8 30.♘f6+ ♔g7 31.♘d7 1-0, Kramnik-Vovk, World Blitz Championship, Berlin 2015.

Later I looked a little at this position, and it seemed to me that 10.c4 was perhaps more interesting and more critical.

10...e4

The most logical move. If Black includes 10...♘c6 11.♘c3, then after 11...e4 White retreats 12.♘e1. On the one hand, this is slightly more passive, but here the knight is not subject to any tactics, and I thought that in the event of the logical continuation 12...♗f5 13.♖ac1 e3 14.f3 White had prospects: in time the e3-pawn may become weak. Although, of course, the position still retains a middlegame character, and in principle Black may acquire some counterplay involving the advance of his kingside pawns. But on the whole the position is unbalanced and interesting from White's point of view.

11.♘d4 c6

An over-solid move, so to speak. All White's pieces stand well; if they unravel unhindered, he will simply have very pleasant pressure. On the basis of this logic, Black should try to go in for concrete play.

Of course, the most critical move here is 11...♘g4. It was this that I analysed and repeated before the game. I will not show any variations, but restrict myself to an evaluation, which is that the position is very complicated.

12.♘c3 ♘a6 13.e3

Not an essential move, but I no longer wanted to allow Black the possibility of playing ...e4-e3. I thought that White had a stable plus, in particular because the e4-pawn is rather weak and the black pieces are tied to it, whereas White has potential play on the queenside. At this moment I was very happy with my position.

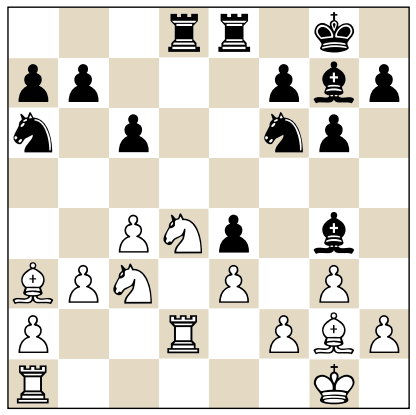
13...♗g4 14.♖d2

When I played 13.e3 I was hoping, to be honest, that, in view of the fact that his position was not very pleasant, my opponent, a player with an active style, would go in for tactical complications, which according to my calculations concluded in White's favour. For example, 14...c5 15.♘db5 ♖ed8 –

'It is hard not to make such a move, when you have seen it. An unexpected stroke, the bishop is placed en prise... I couldn't restrain myself.'

Black burns all his bridges, but even after the simple 16.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 17.♘xa7 he has merely some activity for the pawn, and not full compensation, as it seems to me. And, what is even more important, this is what the computer also thinks.

14...♖ad8



15.h3 At first sight 15...c5 16.hxg4 cxd4 leads to unclear play. Thus if

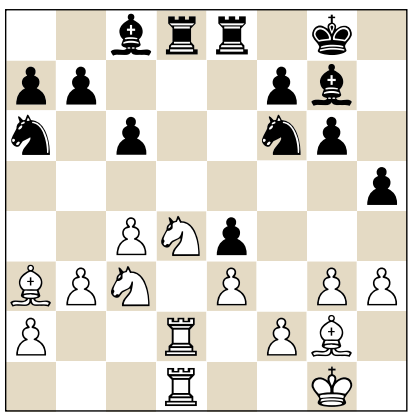
17.exd4 there is the idea 17...e3 18.fxe3 ♗h6. I thought that this might attract my opponent. But after I saw 17.♖ad1, I no longer thought for long over 13.e3. Here Black simply collapses. If 17...d3 there follows 18.g5, or if 17...♘xg4 – 18.♘xe4. Such a move can be overlooked, and there was a hope that this would be played. But, of course, my opponent is a strong enough player to notice it, and he played

15...♗c8 16.♖ad1 White simply has a pleasant advantage.

16...h5

Preventing a possible g3-g4.

Here 17.b4 with the idea of b4-b5 was not at all bad, when if 17...♗f8 White can play 18.c5 and then b5. The position is undoubtedly very comfortable. But I spotted a tactical nuance...



17.♗e7!

This objectively leads to an advantage, and also aesthetically it is hard not to make such a move, when you have seen it. An unexpected stroke, the bishop is placed en prise... I couldn't restrain myself.

From the practical point of view, 17.b4 was simpler, when White retains serious pressure. But I calculated the variations and concluded that White had a strong initiative, and Black would have to display enormous accuracy in defence. I had already seen that one mistake by Black – and the game would conclude; my pawns would be able to promote. That is what happened, although up to a certain point Vocaturo defended well. As far as I understand, he had missed this stroke, since for several minutes

MARIA EMELIANOVA

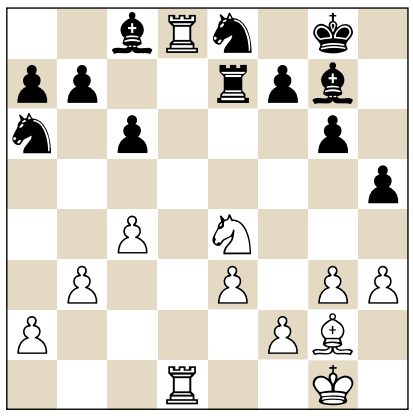
A little after 11 in the morning, Vladimir Kramnik has made his first move against Daniele Vocaturo. Playing on second board the former World Champion was the cornerstone of the Russian team with a 2903 performance.

he did not make his reply, although essentially he had no choice.

17...♖xd4 If 17...♖d7 White plays 18.♗xf6 and ♘xe4, and Black's position is simply lost.

17...♖xe7 18.♘xc6 bxc6 (18...♖xd2 19.♘xe7+ ♔f8 20.♘xc8) 19.♖xd8+ leads to the same as in the game, except that Black is also a pawn down.

18.♖xd4 ♖xe7 19.♖d8+ ♘e8 20.♘xe4



20...♗e6

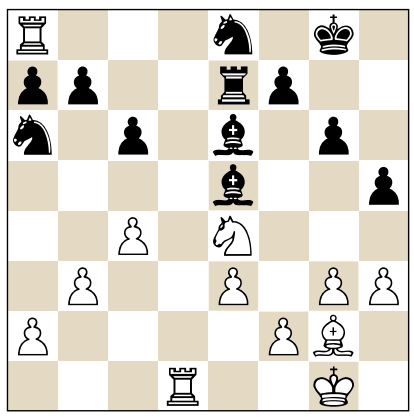
In my calculations I noticed 20...♗xh3, but it would appear that Black's position is altogether bad: 21.♘d6 (a very important resource, with the idea of 21...♗xg2 22.♘xe8, when 23.♘f6 mate is threatened – White remains the exchange up) 21...♗d7 22.♘xb7 ♗g4. I thought that Black could still somehow cling on, but after 23.f3 ♗f5 24.e4 ♗e6 25.♘a5 he loses too much: 25...♔h7 26.♘xc6 ♖c7 27.♘d4, with a technically won endgame.

21.♖a8

I had calculated that I would go after the pawns and at the least pick up the one on a7. I did not look very far, but I thought that White had the advantage – and this accorded with reality. But here Black finds a very good resource.

21...♗e5

Beginning a pursuit of the rook, which may be lost in the corner of the board. I saw from afar that even if it should fall, I would capture on a6 and pick up all the pawns, when all the same White would have the advantage.



22.♖dd8

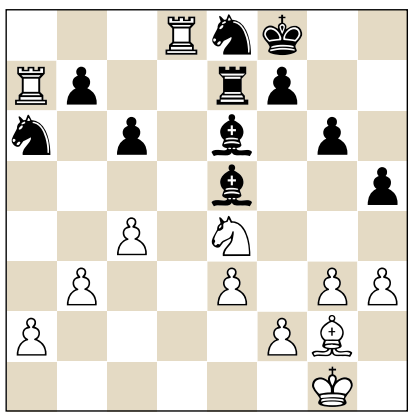
I liked this move. I saw the possibility of 22.♘g5, but I thought that there was

Best performance Board 2

			pts	gms	TPR
1 **Vladimir Kramnik**	RUS	2808	6½	8	2903
2 **Anton Kovalyov**	CAN	2617	8	10	2852
3 **Jorge Cori**	PER	2609	8	10	2810
4 **Ding Liren**	CHN	2753	7½	10	2775
5 **Hikaru Nakamura**	USA	2789	7½	11	2762
6 **Igor Kovalenko**	LVA	2651	8	11	2744
7 **Luka Lenic**	SVN	2622	8	11	2740
8 **Sandro Mareco**	ARG	2606	8	11	2739
9 **Yuriy Kryvoruchko**	UKR	2693	6	9	2717
10 **Alexander Ipatov**	TUR	2652	7½	10	2713

no need for this. After analysing the game I was forced to admit that this knight move was stronger and would have led to an enormous advantage for White. I considered the main reply to be 22...♔f8 and I thought that after 23.♘xe6+ fxe6 24.♖dd8 ♗c7 25.♖dc8 ♗b6 Black could still hold on, but here there is the important nuance 26.♗e4!. White unexpectedly comes in from the other side and picks up the g6-pawn, and after, say, 26...♘ac7 27.♗xg6 ♘xa8 28.♖xa8 Black essentially cannot disentangle himself (in addition, the h-pawn falls). Therefore the computer considers that it is better to play 22...♔g7 23.♘xe6+ fxe6 24.♖dd8 ♘f6 25.♖xa7 ♘c5, and it still tries somehow to hold on, although I think that after 26.b4 the position is a technical one. White should quite calmly convert his advantage into a win. The move in the game does not lose the advantage, but 22.♘g5 was more accurate. This was my only error.

22...♔f8 23.♖xa7



23...♗c7

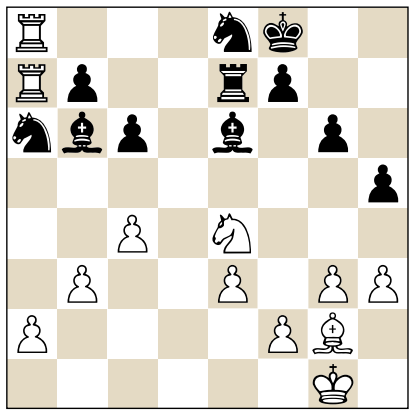
Like my opponent, I considered the variation with 23...♗c7 and calculated it quite far, to a winning position for White.

But I overlooked the computer resource 23...♗f5. It is a rather strange move, Black seemingly does not want anything, and so I did not see any point in it, but in fact here everything is far from simple. Objectively White's advantage is not so great: 24.♘g5 ♗c7 25.♖da8 ♗b6 26.♖xa6 bxa6 27.♖xa6. White picks up the c6-pawn, but Black can still defend. The strongest is probably 27...♗d8 28.♗xc6 ♖c7 29.h4 ♗c8 30.♖b6 ♔e7 31.♘f3, when White has four pawns for a piece, but Black has two bishops, in contrast to the game, where there were three pawns, but the light-squared bishop was exchanged. Black is capable of defending. The computer considers that White has a small advantage. I think that in a practical game it would not be easy for Black to save the position, because the pawns advance and it is very difficult to stop them. But nevertheless Black can fight, and this was undoubtedly the best chance.

Another computer recommendation, 23...f6 (a move which also did not occur to me) 24.♘d2 ♗c7 25.♖da8, comes to roughly the same thing. After ...♗b6 and the captures on a6 and c6 the white knight goes to d4. After all, it was probably best to play 23...♗f5.

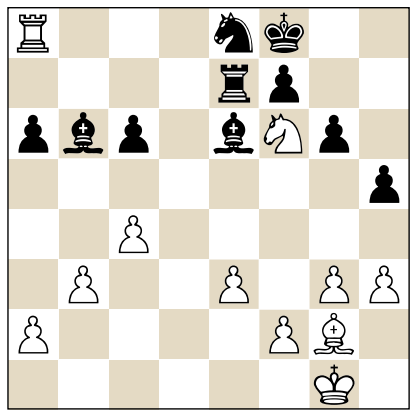
24.♖da8 An amusing doubling.

24...♗b6



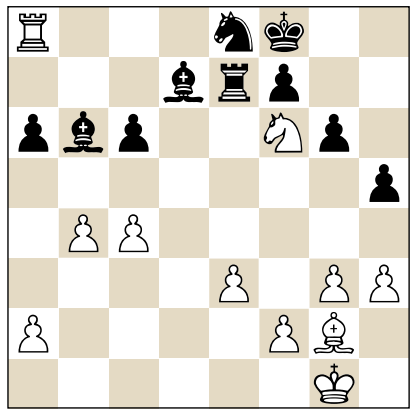
25.♖xa6 bxa6 26.♘f6!

It is probable that in advance my opponent had underestimated this move, expecting the immediate capture of the a6-pawn, where all is not so clear. But after 26.♘f6 Black is practically stalemated. If 26...c5 there follows 27.♗c6. He is forced to play:



26...♗d7 Of course, it was possible to capture on d7, with four pawns for the piece and good winning chances. But I again noticed that Black was simply stalemated, with no next move. I even considered altogether mocking moves such as 27.h4.

27.b4



The most critical. I begin advancing my pawns, and Black is forced to play:

27...c5

He cannot disentangle himself, since if 27...♔g7 there follows 28.♘xd7 and 29.♖xe8, while if 27...♗c7, then 28.c5 ♗e5 29.♘xd7+ ♖xd7 30.♗xc6 ♖e7, and now either the capture on a6, or 31.a4, which in my opinion is even better – the pawns simply promote.

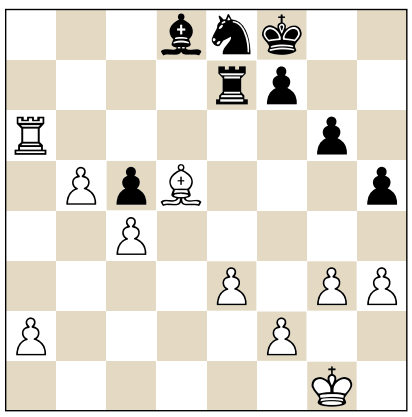
28.♘d5 Here some calculation was needed, but, fortunately for White, not very complicated. In principle the position is one that can be evaluated.

28...♗c6

The only chance. If 28...♖e6, then

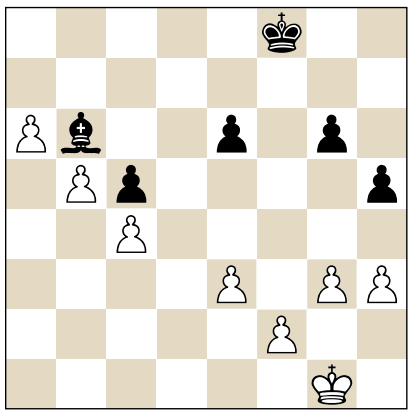
after 29.♖b8 ♗a7 30.♖b7 the bishop is unexpectedly trapped.

29.♖xa6 ♗xd5 30.♗xd5 ♗d8 31.b5



When from afar I went in for this position, it seemed obvious to me that sooner or later the white pawns were bound to promote.

31...♖d7 31...♘c7 was possibly better, although it looks horrible: 32.♖d6 ♖e8 33.♗c6 ♗e7 34.♖d7 ♘e6. It is probable that White can win gradually, but for interest's sake (in the aim of general development, so to speak) I analysed a position which can arise by force – 35.a4 ♖d8 36.a5 ♖xd7 37.♗xd7 ♗d8 38.a6 ♗b6 39.♗xe6 fxe6.

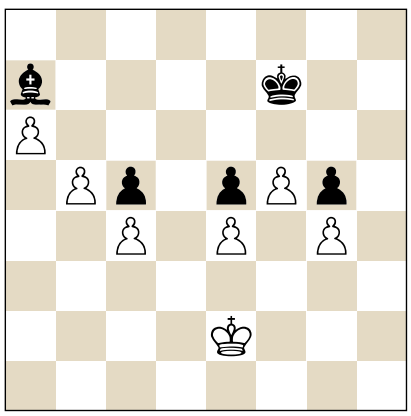


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

At the board I guessed that this endgame was won, but there was no point in calculating it to the end.

After analysing it, I realized that it was indeed won. I am not obliged to go in for it, but this is the most forceful solution. The plan is simple: I prepare the creation of a passed pawn – 40.♔g2 ♔e7 41.f4 ♔f6 42.♔f3 ♗a7 43.g4 hxg4+ 44.hxg4 ♔f7 45.e4. The threat is e5, ♔e4 and f5; if Black exchanges on f5, then after e6+ the king breaks through to c6, while if he does not capture, I place my pawn on f6 and the win is even simpler than in the main line.

Therefore Black has to play 45...e5 46.f5 g5, and here he is unsuccessful in the tempo play after 47.♔e2.

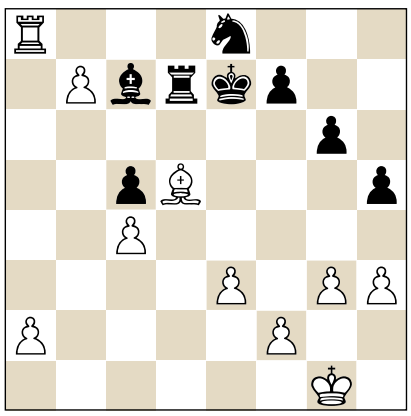


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

The king goes to a4, and with the bishop on b6 I play a7 and with the bishop on a7 I play b6 and the king invades. And if the black king rushes to the queenside – 47...♔e7 48.♔d1 ♔d6 49.♔c2 ♔c7, the pawn endgame is won after 50.f6 (otherwise Black would regroup with ...♔b6 and ...♗b8-d6) 50...♔d7 51.♔b3 ♔e6 52.♔a4 ♗b6 53.a7.

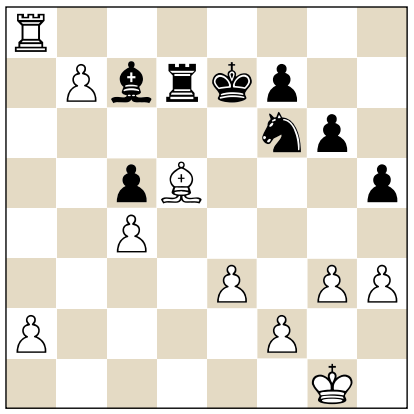
32.b6 Subsequently I spent time only to ensure that I did not throw away a certain win – tiredness after all, the last round, an important match... In principle White's play here is simple.

32...♔e7 33.b7 ♗c7 34.♖a8



34...♘f6

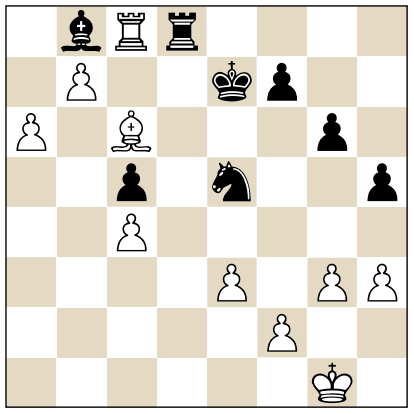
If 34...♖d8, then 35.a4 ♘d6 36.a5, and White wins, since if 36...♘xb7 there is 37.♖a7, picking up all the pawns in the ending with opposite-coloured bishops.



35.♖c8 ♗d6 I thought that 35...♗e5 was the best chance, but the rook endgame after 36.f4 ♘xd5 37.fxe5 ♖xb7 38.cxd5 is lost, for example: 38...♖a7 39.♖xc5 ♖xa2 40.♖c7+ ♔e8 41.d6 ♖e2 42.♖e7+ ♔f8 43.e6. And after the continuation in the game my pawns promote.

36.♗c6 ♖d8 37.a4 ♘d7 38.a5 ♗b8 If 38...♘b8, then 39.♗b5 is good enough.

39.a6 ♘e5



Everything wins, but I decided to play, so to speak, as safely as possible.

40.♖xb8 ♖xb8 41.♗d5

Here Black finally resigned.

The game was not very complicated, but I liked the move 17.♗e7 – simply placing a bishop en prise like this is rarely possible, and also the stalemating 26.♘f6. Choosing the game for commentary was partly associated with the fact that after the tournament Alexander Grischuk said that of my games this was the one that he liked the most. I decided to rely on the taste of the far from lowest grandmaster.

With the exception of one error, the game was very clean. It has its aesthetic side, and in general this also appealed to me. ■

Time for Lucky Red

Chinese women end 12-year drought

It had been a long, often mortifying wait. Their last victory, in 2004, felt like a memory from a distant past. At the previous three Olympiads, they had had to settle for silver behind Russia, but this time everything fell into place. With a last-round win over their Russian arch-rivals, the Chinese women won the Vera Menchik Cup for the 5th time. Multiple Dutch champion (and three-time Chinese champion!) **PENG ZHAOQIN** presents her insider's view.

The 11th and last round was going to be the crucial one. After 10 rounds, China was in the sole lead with 18 match points, two points ahead of their nearest pursuers, the defending champions from Russia. The evening before the clash, the Chinese had their last team meeting. Chief coach Ye Jiangchuan and women's coach Yu Shaoteng instructed the players to play solidly and safely, since a tie would secure the title. The Lucky Red was prepared. For the last several rounds the girls had been playing in red T-shirts and they had been victorious in Lucky Red every time. There is no harm in a little superstition as long as you keep on winning!

So far the tournament had not been easy for the Chinese. In the first half they had been vulnerable. In Round 3, they drew against Vietnam and in Round 6 against Romania. In Round 4, World Champion Hou Yifan (2658) had lost to the much lower rated Dana Reizniece-Ozola (2243), Latvia's Minister of Finance. But things went better now, and all eyes were on the women's team since the men's team had performed disappointingly and had long lost the chance to prolong their title. Tension in the Chinese camp was mounting.

The match started badly for the Chinese women when Natalija Pogonina beat Guo Qi in a Catalan on Board 4. Fortunately, top-scorer Tan Zhongyi (9 out 11) won her game against Aleksandra Goryachkina on Board 3 to equalize the score. With two games going, the Chinese needed only one more point to secure the title. On Board 2, Valentina Gunina, playing as White, had sacrificed a piece in the middle game and was trying to create attacking chances on the kingside. Ju Wenjun immediately returned the material and liquidated to a safe and better endgame. With a swift-moving passed pawn on the c-file and fine endgame technique

There seems to be a special light shining on Hou Yifan as she makes the first moves against Alexandra Kosteniuk in the crucial China-Russia match. Maybe that's why she is the only one playing without China's Lucky Red shirt and Ju Wenjun sitting next to her, need not worry.

Ju won after 55 moves and scored the decisive point.

Finally, the battle on Board 1 between World Champion Hou Yifan and ex-World Champion Alexandra Kosteniuk ended in a draw after 65 moves, so China won the match 2½- 1½.

The last time the Chinese women's team won the Olympiad was in 2004. Led by former World Champion Xie Jun, a pioneer for women's chess in China, they won their 4th consecutive Olympiad. The following years saw many changes. Xie Jun stopped playing professionally and started working as an official for the Beijing Sports Commission. Another former World Champion (2001), Zhu Chen, changed her federation to Qatar, her husband GM Mohamad Al-Modiahki's country, in 2006.

At that point, another three-time Olympiad winner, Xu Yuhua, became the leading player. In March 2006, she won the Women's World Chess Championship knock-out tournament in Ekaterinburg, Russia, after beating Alisa Galliamova. Remarkably, as she was defeating everybody, she was three months pregnant. After her son had been born Xu became a national team coach, and great responsibilities passed on to the next generation.

Fortunately, that generation saw the rise of a prodigy. At the age of 12, Hou Yifan showed her special talent by becoming, in 2006, the youngest player ever to participate in the Women's World Championship and the Olympiad. In 2010, at the age of 16, she became the youngest World Champion in history in Hatay, Turkey. But she had to wait till the 42nd Olympiad in Baku before she led the national team to gold again.

The news of the victory in Baku spread all over China, and the players found themselves on the front pages of many Sport newspapers. Representatives of CCTV, China's biggest broadcasting network, journalists and hundreds of fans with flowers

were waiting at the Beijing Airport to welcome their chess heroes.

Coach Yu Shaoteng told me that the secret of their success was concentration and unity. The focus of the players was the result of an intense 10-day training session before the Olympiad at the Longgang Dayu Culture and Sports Resort Centre in Shen Zhen, a city north of Hong Kong. All the team members and coaches attended, except for Hou Yifan, who was playing a tournament abroad. The sessions not only contained technical trainings but also sport activities to get the players physically and psychologically ready for tough fights. In Baku, the players were supposed to focus on their games, prepare thoroughly and put the team result before individual success.

The key player on the team was, of course, Hou Yifan. Although not performing at her best, she scored 5½ from 8 and brought home the silver medal on Board 1. She was calm and stable and had a positive influence on the others. Hou Yifan has an independent personality. She is a universal player and an excellent student. Over the past few years, she has been traveling and playing, not with a coach, but with her mother Wang Qian, who is her personal assistant, nurse and cook and is very important for Hou Yifan. During this year's Wijk aan Zee tournament, I wanted to invite them for dinner, but instead Wang Qian invited me to share dinner with them in their room. She showed her skills in the small kitchen with rice, dry meat and dry vegetables that she had brought with her from China. It was a simple but delicious dinner.

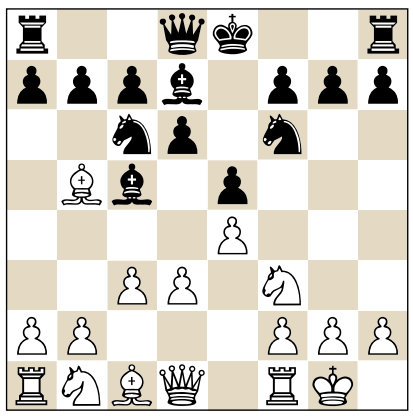
After some years of study Hou Yifan has just finished her undergraduate studies in International Affairs at Beijing University. She hopes to go to an American university, but is also considering an English one, as the UK presents better possibilities to combine study with chess activities.

When asked to comment on one of her games from Baku, she chose the following one.

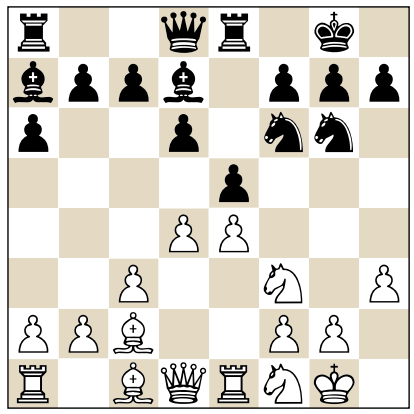
NOTES BY
Hou Yifan

Hou Yifan
Pham Le Thao Nguyen
Baku 2016 (3)
Ruy Lopez, Berlin Defence

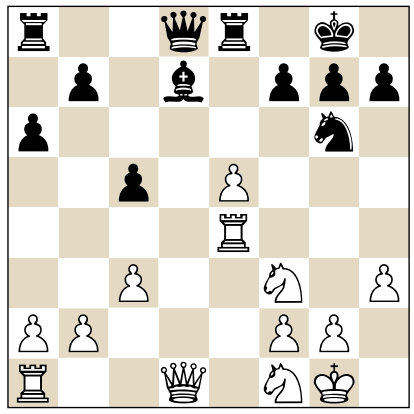
This was my 6th Olympiad, and indeed, one of the best I've ever participated in!
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.d3 ♗c5 5.c3 d6 6.0-0 ♗d7



The Anti-Berlin has become one of the most popular openings at the top level, and this fashion is followed by many other players. Here the more common way is the immediate 6...0-0, with the idea of ..♘e7, and so on. One of my opponent's previous game shows that she likes playing ...♗d7 first to avoid the exchange on c6.
7.♗a4 a6 8.h3 ♗a7 9.♖e1 0-0 10.♗c2 ♘e7
The typical idea in such positions, although ...♗d7 may waste a tempo in certain cases. Another option is 10...♖e8, when White should not rush with 11.d4, since this will yield nothing after 11...exd4 12.cxd4 ♘b4.
11.d4 ♘g6 12.♘bd2 ♖e8 13.♘f1



The first critical position. Both players spent a lot of time here. The text-move seems natural for White, but its assessment depends on the strength of the immediate reply 13...d5. After the following analysis the conclusion is unclear, but in the current position it is not easy to recommend an alternative for developing White's position.
13...♘h5 To undermine the stability of White's centre Black has to react at once with 13...d5!, when the various possibilities do not favour White at all: 14.dxe5 (after both 14.♗g5 h6 15.♗xf6 ♕xf6 16.♘e3 dxe4 17.dxe5 ♕b6! 18.♗xe4 ♘xe5 and 14.♘xe5 ♘xe4! 15.♘xg6 hxg6 the chances are equal) 14...♘xe4 15.♗e3 ♗xe3 16.♖xe3 c6 (the simplest solution, although 16...♗f5 also works) 17.♗xe4 dxe4 18.♖xe4 c5!



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

with enough compensation for Black, since the e5-pawn will be recaptured, because after ...♗c6 an exchange on f3 is unavoidable.

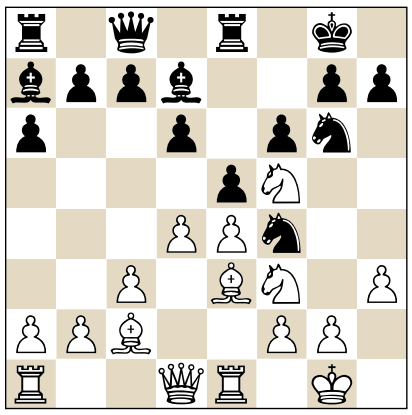
Baku 2016 – China (women)

			pts	gms	TPR
1	**Hou Yifan**	2658	5½	8	**2547**
2	**Ju Wenjun**	2583	7½	11	**2501**
3	**Zhao Xue**	2522	3½	6	**2345**
4	**Tan Zhongyi**	2475	9	11	**2565**
5	**Guo Qi**	2417	5½	8	**2394**

14.♗e3 ♘hf4

More accurate was to move the other knight to f4, so as to keep the one on h5 in order to stop ♘g3: 14...♘gf4 15.♘g3 (after 15.♔h2, with the idea of 15...h6 16.g4 ♘f6 17.♗xf4 exf4, the pawn on g4 compensates for Black's weakened pawn structure) 15...♘xg3 16.fxg3 ♘g6, and with the centre not fixed, the open f-file doesn't offer White any attacking chances.

15.♘g3 ♕c8 16.♘f5 f6



17.c4?

This was another critical position, and here I made a positional mistake. 17.c4 automatically weakens the central pawn structure and relieves the pressure on Black's pieces.

The best and simplest way to proceed was to reinforce the centre with 17.♕d2, when all her uncoordinated pieces force Black to find some counterplay: 17...d5 (17...♔h8 18.♖ad1, and Black will slowly be crushed) 18.dxe5 ♗xe3 (after 18...dxe4 19.♗xf4 ♗xf5, 20.exf6! is strong, and after 18...fxe5 White goes 19.♖ad1) 19.fxe3 dxe4 20.exf4 ♗xf5 21.♗xe4, with a clear advantage for White.

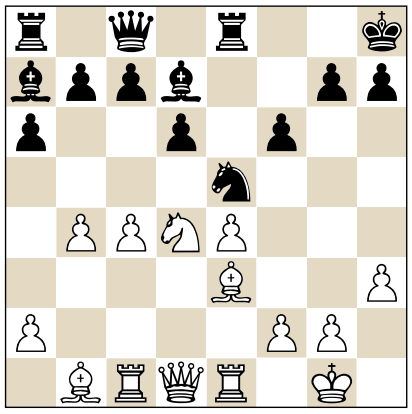
17...♘e6 A wise reaction! Suddenly the a7-bishop and the f4-knight join the fight. The downside of White's last move has been exposed.

17...b5 was too rash: 18.c5! exd4 19.♗xf4 ♘xf4 20.♕d2 ♘g6 21.cxd6, with an attack.

18.b4

The game is moving into the wrong direction. White is supposed to strengthen the centre instead of gaining a space advantage on the queenside. After 18.d5 ♘ef8 19.♗xa7 ♖xa7 20.♘e3 White would have the initiative.

18...exd4 19.♘3xd4 ♘xd4 20.♘xd4 ♔h8 21.♖c1 ♘e5 22.♗b1



22...c5 The tempting combination against the white king doesn't work: 22...♗xh3 23.gxh3 ♕xh3 24.♖c3! (the only move to survive: 24.c5 dxc5 25.bxc5 ♖ad8 26.♖c3 b6! is too shaky for White) 24...♘g4 25.♕f3 ♕h2+ 26.♔f1, and White safely walks away from the attack.

Another option was to try and exploit the powerful knight on e5: 22...b5!? 23.c5 dxc5 24.bxc5 ♘c4 25.♕d3!? (eyeing the frail kingside) 25...♖e5 26.♗f4 ♗xc5! 27.♗xe5 ♘xe5 28.♕c3 ♗b6, and the active bishop pair plus the pawn chain on the queenside give Black enough compensation.

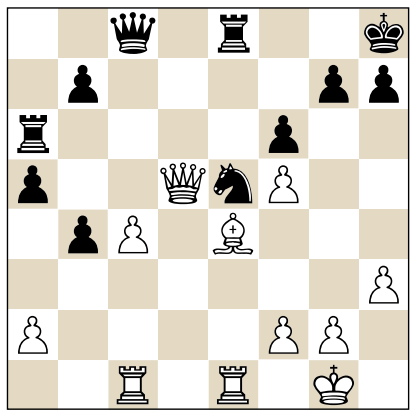
23.♘f5 ♗xf5 24.exf5 cxb4 25.♗xa7 ♖xa7 26.♕xd6 a5 27.♗e4 ♖a6

Our reporter (and Holland's first board) Peng Zhaoqin catches up with good friends Hou Yifan and China's head coach Ye Jiangchuan.

After a series of exchanges the position has been simplified and is almost equal: the doubled f-pawns give Black enough time to coordinate her pieces and hold the position. There's no open file for White to use with her active queen and bishop.

Another idea was 27...♖a8. Since the 8th rank is playing a major role, it's not such a bad idea to defend it in advance.

28.♕d5



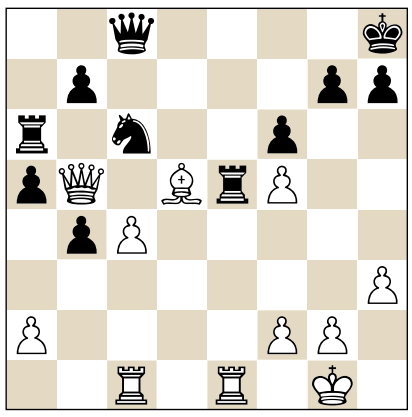
28...♘c6 Starting from this point, a few inaccurate moves lead to a hopeless position for Black. It shows that in such a 'simple' position the player with potential weaknesses needs to be more careful.

Best was 28...♖e7, to keep the knight on e5 to temporarily block the e-file and provoke f4, which would defi-

nitely be in Black's favour. After 29.♕b5 ♖a8 (an important move!) 30.c5 h6 the position is about equal.

29.♕b5 ♖e5?! Again, this move helps White to get her pieces to the right squares. It was not too late for 29...♖a8! to balance the position. In that case, too, 30.♗d5 is the only way to make progress, and now 30...♖xe1+ 31.♖xe1 h6 gains an important tempo compared to the game: 32.♗e6 ♕b8 33.c5 ♔h7.

30.♗d5

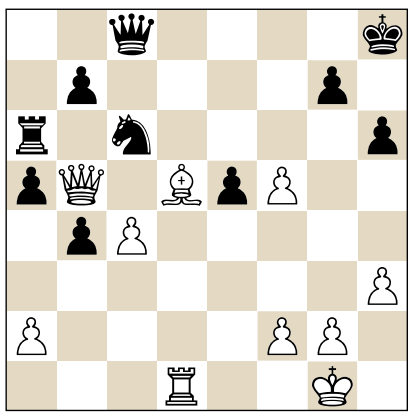


30...h6

The last mistake under time-pressure. Black shouldn't have weakened the kingside and allowed the f6-push. Nevertheless, after 30...♖xe1+ 31.♖xe1 ♖a8 32.♗e6 ♕b8 33.c5 White could still hope for something.

31.♖xe5 After the exchange on e5 White's pawn structure suddenly becomes very powerful in the attack.

31...fxe5 32.♖d1 The open d-file will decide the issue. The final target is to reach the 7th rank, while Black's rook cannot join the fight.



32...♕c7 In case of 32...♕d7, with the idea to stop 33.♗e6 and 33.♖d7, White plays 33.♗f3 ♕e7 34.♗xc6 ♖xc6 35.♕xa5, with a winning position. **33.♗e6** After the decisive penetration to the 7th rank, combined with Black's exposed light squares, the white attack becomes unstoppable. **33...♕b6** 33...♖b6 would be met by 34.♕c5. **34.♖d7 ♔h7 35.f6** Black resigned.

■ ■ ■

On Board 2, the tough and tenacious Ju Wenjun played all games and scored 7½ out of 11, which was good enough for a silver board medal. The 25-year-old GM is not only the second-best female player in China, but now also the second best female player in the world rankings. In January of this year, she scored an excellent second place (7/9) in the New Zealand Open, beating Nigel Short, and immediately travelled on to compete in 13 heavy rounds in the Tata Steel Challengers in Wijk aan Zee. It is incredible that in so many long classical games she maintained such a high level. She is also a student at the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics.

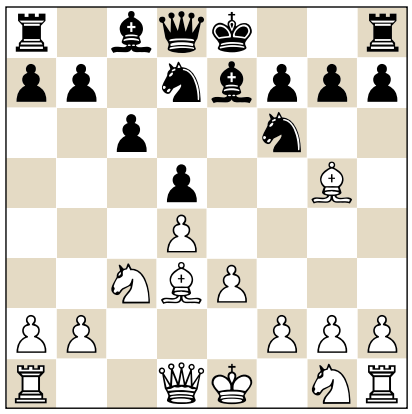
This was her favourite game.

NOTES BY
Ju Wenjun

Ju Wenjun
Laura Rogule
Baku 2016 (4)
Queen's Gambit Declined,
Exchange Variation

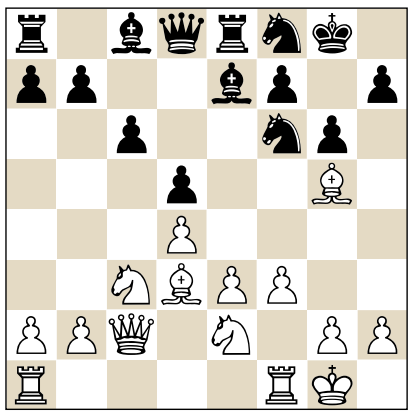
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5 c6 6.e3 ♗e7 7.♗d3 ♘bd7

Before the round I had been considering which square the knight should go to, e2 or f3. In this position, playing the knight to f3 is the most common move, and it gives White a slightly better game, but Black is solid. Therefore I decided to play 8.♘ge2. Coincidentally, Wesley So played a similar position in this round and he chose to develop the knight to f3 and gained some advantage after the opening.



8.♘ge2 After 8.h3 0-0 9.♕c2 ♖e8 10.♘f3 ♘f8 11.0-0 g6 12.♗f4 ♘e6 13.♗h2 ♘g7 14.♖ab1 a5 15.a3 ♗f5 16.b4 axb4 17.axb4 ♗xd3 18.♕xd3 ♖a3 19.♕c2 ♗d6 20.♗xd6 ♕xd6 21.b5 ♘e6 22.bxc6 bxc6 White was clearly better in So-Hracek (½-½, 60).

8...0-0 9.0-0 ♖e8 10.♕c2 ♘f8 11.f3 g6



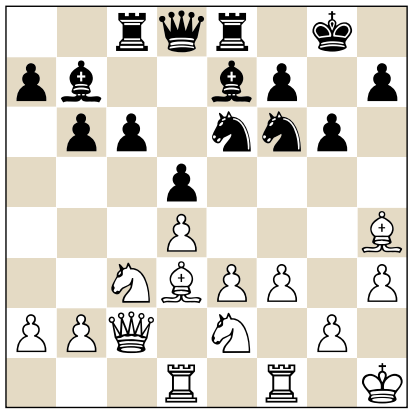
12.♖ae1 b6

12...♘e6 13.♗h4 b6 is more precise.

13.♔h1 Nothing special, just a move to make my king safe in case Black pushes ...c5 or I play e4.

Another idea is 13.♘f4, when after 13...♘e6 14.♘xe6 ♗xe6 15.f4 White has attacking chances.

13...♘e6 14.♗h4 ♗b7 15.♖d1 The rook moves back; it operates better on the d-file. **15...♖c8 16.h3**



ETERI KUBLASHVILI

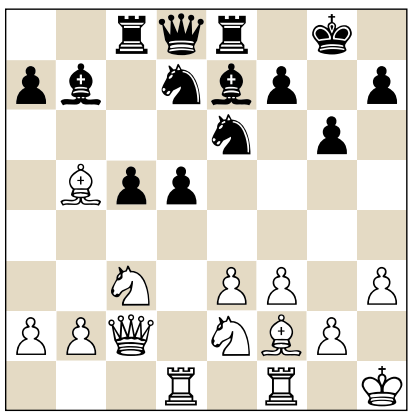
Tough and tenacious. 25-Year-old Ju Wenjun is not only the second-best female player in China, but now also the second best female player in the world rankings.

16...♘d7 An interesting idea was 16...♘h5 17.♗f2 ♗h4! 18.g3 (Black is better after 18.♔g1 ♗xf2+ 19.♖xf2 ♕h4, when she can aim for ...c5 or doubling rooks on the e-file) 18...♗e7, weakening my kingside: 19.g4 ♘hg7 20.f4 c5, with a black edge.

17.♗f2 c5?

In these positions, ...c5 is a common idea, but this is not the right moment.

18.dxc5 bxc5 19.♗b5!



Suddenly my pieces are powerful.

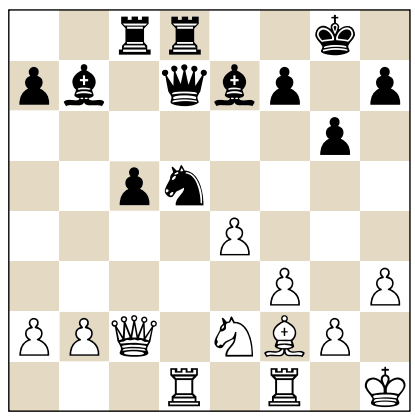
19...♘c7 20.♗a4 ♖f8 21.♗xd7?

Much better was 21.e4!, when after 21...d4 22.♘xd4 cxd4 23.♖xd4 White is winning.

21...♕xd7 22.♘xd5 ♘xd5?

Black should have taken with the bishop, 22...♗xd5, when after 23.e4 ♕c6 24.exd5 ♘xd5 25.♖fe1 White is slightly better.

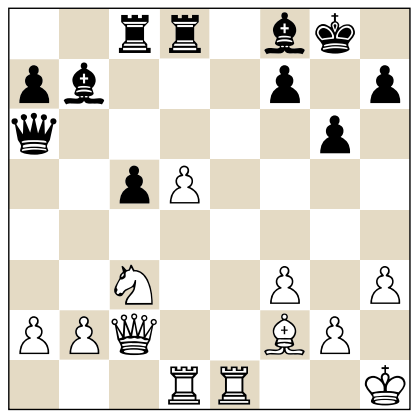
23.e4 ♖fd8



24.♘c3! ♕e6 25.exd5 ♕a6

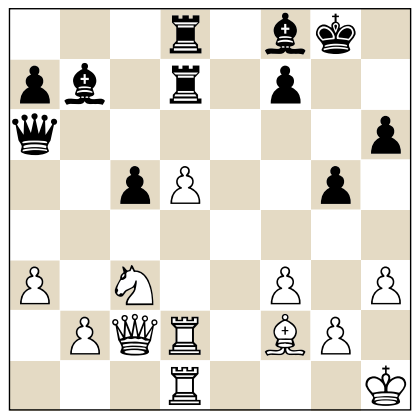
25...♗xd5 is met by 26.♖fe1 .

26.♖fe1 ♗f8



27.a3 Best was 27.♗h4! ♖d7 28.♘e4 ♗g7 29.♘xc5 ♕b5 30.♘xd7 ♖xc2 31.♖e8+ ♗f8 32.♖xf8+ ♔g7 33.♗f6+ ♔h6. The black king seems to escape and here I stopped calculating. Actually, what is awaiting him is cruel: 34.♘e5 ♖xg2 35.♖h8 g5 36.♔xg2 ♕e2+ 37.♔g3 ♕xd1 38.♘g4+ ♔g6 39.♖g8+ ♔f5 40.♖xg5 mate.

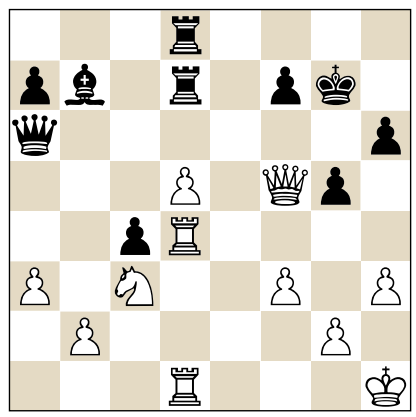
27...♖d7 28.♗h4 h6 29.♖e2 g5 30.♗f2 ♖cd8 31.♖ed2



31...c4 A better defence was 31...♕g6, when for instance after 32.♕xg6+ fxg6 33.♗g3 ♗g7 34.d6 ♗xc3 35.bxc3 ♗c6 it will not be easy for White to make progress.

32.♕f5 Stronger was 32.♗d4! ♗xd5 33.♗f6! ♕xf6 34.♘xd5 ♕e6 35.♘f6+ ♕xf6 36.♖xd7 ♖xd7 37.♖xd7, and White should win.

32...♗g7 33.♗d4 ♗xd4 34.♖xd4 ♔g7?



35.d6! Now the black queen is cut off and the game is over. **35...♗c6 36.h4 f6 37.h5 ♕b7 38.♕g6+ ♔h8 39.♕xh6+ ♔g8 40.♕xf6 ♖f8 41.♕e6+ ♔h8 42.♕h6+ ♔g8 43.♘d5 ♖h7 44.♘f6+ ♖xf6 45.♕xf6** Black resigned.

■ ■ ■

Baku (women) 2016

		Pts	Tiebreak
1	China	20	416
2	Poland	17	427.5
3	Ukraine	17	404.5
4	Russia	16	380.5
5	India	16	342.5
6	USA	16	332.5
7	Vietnam	16	328
8	Azerbaijan 1	16	309
9	Israel	16	307.5
10	Georgia	15	356.5
11	Iran	15	337.5
12	Lithuania	15	324
13	Serbia	15	321.5
14	France	15	320
15	Bulgaria	15	309.5
16	Hungary	15	304
17	Belarus	15	296
18	Cuba	15	272
19	Romania	14	325
20	Mongolia	14	301.5
21	Netherlands	14	300.5
22	Uzbekistan	14	300
23	Sweden	14	286
24	Slovenia	14	278.5
25	Malaysia	14	277
26	Estonia	14	267
27	Ecuador	14	265
28	Peru	14	262.5
29	Austria	14	254
30	Azerbaijan 3	13	291.5

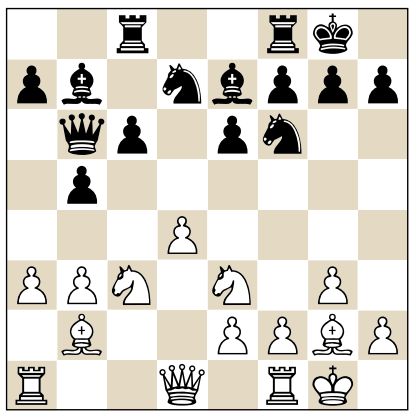
157 teams, 11 rounds

The best score of the Chinese team was made by 25-year-old Tan Zhongyi, a graduate from the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics. She collected a superior nine points from 11 games without a single loss and won the gold medal on Board 4. Her defeats of Zhukova from Ukraine in Round 7 and Goryachkina from Russia in the final round were absolutely crucial. The girls U-10 World Champion in 2000 and U-12 in 2002 complained that she couldn't enjoy all the beautiful skirts she had brought with her because of the air conditioning in the hall and the team's 'Lucky Red'. But of course she happily put personal feelings aside and did everything that was necessary for the team.

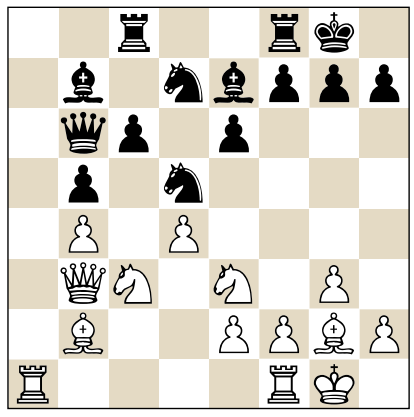
NOTES BY
Tan Zhongyi

Tan Zhongyi
Aleksandra Goryachkina
Baku 2016 (11)
Queen's Gambit Declined, Semi-Slav

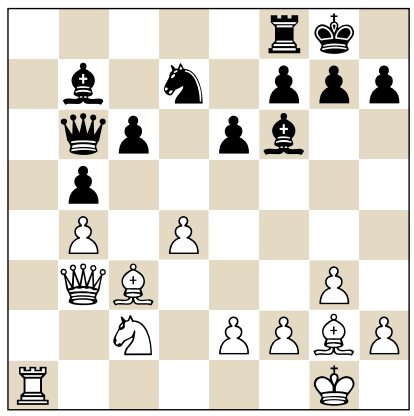
This game was played in the final round. We were leading but our opponent was our closest pursuer, Russia. It was going to be a big clash, in which we must not lose, as a tie would secure the title.
Playing with the white pieces I hoped to put some pressure on my opponent, but I should not take too much risk, as a draw would be acceptable.
1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 ♘f6 3.c4 c6 4.♘c3 e6 5.g3 dxc4 She played this variation for the first time. **6.♘e5 ♘bd7 7.♘xc4 b5**
As my opponent spent little time on these moves, I supposed she must have been well prepared and I needed to be careful.
8.♘e3 ♗b7 9.♗g2 ♕b6 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.b3 0-0 12.♗b2 ♖ac8
I would prefer developing the other rook and trying to restrict White's activities in the centre with 12...♖fd8, for instance 13.♕d3 ♖ac8 14.♖fd1 a6 15.a4.
13.a3



13...♘d5?!
A dubious move. Obviously, White is going to play b4, to control Black's queenside and fix the weaknesses on c6 and b7. Therefore Black should have advanced the c-pawn and opened up the position before White could carry out her plan.
Black may have been worried about 14.d5, but there was no need to. After 13...c5 14.d5 exd5 15.♘cxd5 ♘xd5 16.♘xd5 ♗xd5 17.♕xd5 ♗f6 18.♖ab1 ♗xb2 19.♖xb2 ♖fd8 20.♖c1 ♕a5 the position is equal.
14.b4 a5 15.♕b3 axb4 16.axb4

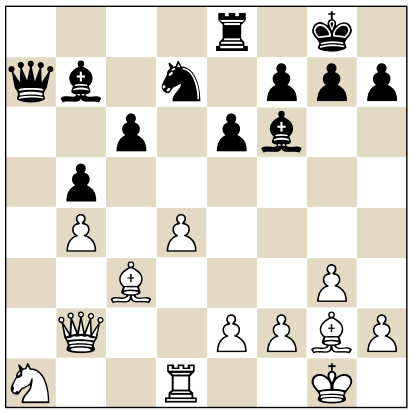


16...♖a8?! A dubious move. Black was not advised to play 16...♘xb4? in view of 17.♗a3 c5 18.dxc5 ♕xc5 19.♖ac1 ♗xg2 20.♔xg2 winning, but after 16...♘xe3 17.fxe3 ♘f6 18.♘e4 ♘xe4 19.♗xe4 ♕c7 20.♖a7 ♖a8 21.♖xa8 ♗xa8 22.♗f3 White is only marginally better.
17.♘c2 Preparing e4. Reaching such an ideal position without having to make any concessions, White can obviously be very satisfied. Black is quite passive now.
17...♘xc3 18.♗xc3 ♖xa1 19.♖xa1 ♗f6

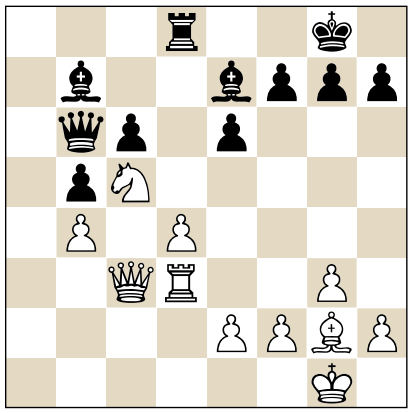


20.♕b2 Maybe better was 20.e3 e5 21.dxe5 ♘xe5 22.♗d4 ♕c7 23.♕c3, with a white advantage.
20...♖e8 21.♖d1 ♕a7
Black's queen is placed badly. But anyway, it's now very difficult for Black to solve her positional problems.

22.♘a1 White manoeuvres her knight to c5.



22...♘b6 23.♘b3 ♘a4 24.♕c2 ♘xc3 25.♕xc3 ♕b6 26.♘c5 ♖d8 27.♖d3 ♗e7



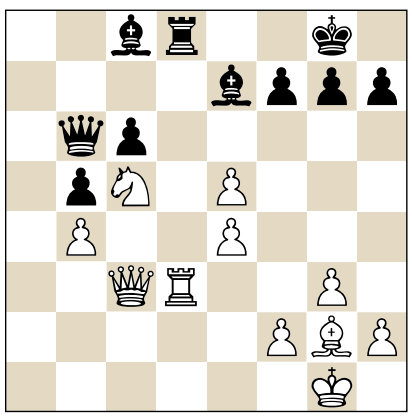
28.e4

Winning the c6-pawn would not be enough, as after 28.♘xb7?! ♕xb7 29.♕xc6 ♕xc6 30.♗xc6 ♗xb4 31.♗xb5 g6 White is only slightly better.

28...e5!

Strong defending. I had overlooked this move. Instead, 28...♗xc5 would have led to immediate defeat after 29.dxc5 ♖xd3 30.♕xd3 ♕c7 31.e5 g6 32.♕d6 ♕c8 33.h4 h5 34.♔h2 ♔g7 35.♗e4 ♕e8 36.♕c7 ♗a8 37.f3.

29.dxe5 ♗c8



DAVID LLADA

Tan Zhongyi could not wear all the beautiful skirts she had brought with her to Baku, but that did not stop her from winning gold on Board 4.

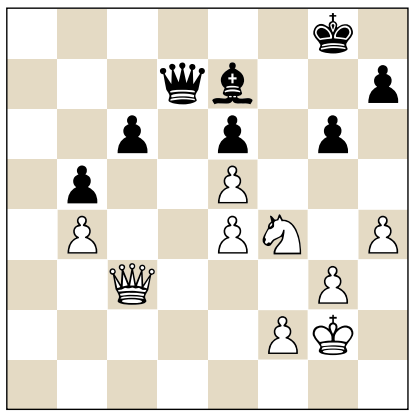
30.♗f1 After 30.e6 fxe6 31.♗h3 ♗xc5 32.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 33.♕xc5 ♗d7 34.e5 ♔f7 White should be better, but I couldn't evaluate the position clearly. I did not want to return the pawn.

30...♖xd3 31.♗xd3 ♕d8 32.♗c2 ♗h3 33.♘d3 ♕d7 Due to time-trouble, Black failed to find the best defence. Better was 33...g5 34.♕xc6 ♕d4.

34.♘f4 ♗g4 35.♗b3 g6

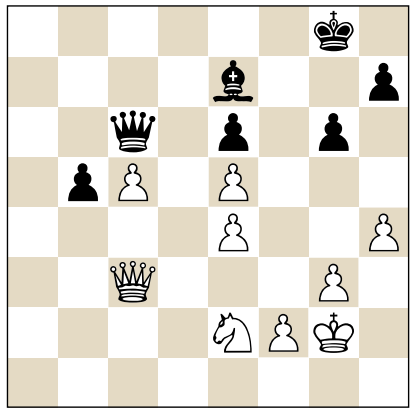
More tenacious was 35...g5, although White would be clearly better after 36.e6 fxe6 37.♘d3 ♗f8 38.♔g2.

36.h3 ♗e6 37.♗xe6 fxe6 38.♔g2 ♗f8 39.h4 ♗e7

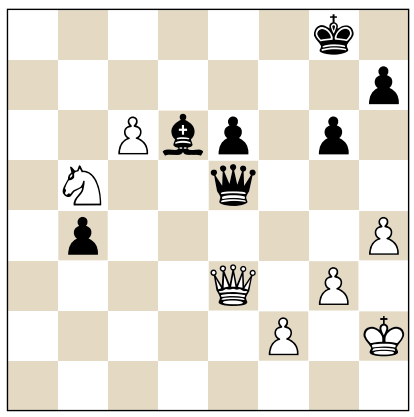


40.♘e2 I was not really calm when I made the last move before the time-control. I should have played more solidly till I had reached it. There was nothing wrong with 40.♘d3.

40...c5 The only move. **41.bxc5 ♕c6** Having made the first time-control, I thought I would be unable to win. But Fortune was on my side. After a long think I found a way to victory.



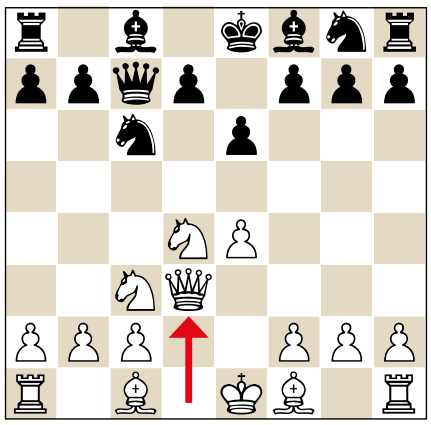
42.♘d4! ♕xe4+ 43.♔h2 ♕xe5 44.c6 ♗d6 45.♕e3 b4 46.♘b5



I had seen clearly that this was winning. **46...♕xb5 47.♕xe6+ ♔g7 48.♕xd6 ♕b6 49.♔g2 b3 50.♕e7+ ♔g8 51.♕b7** Black resigned. And so I scored a lucky full point ☺. ■

A tricky early queen move versus the Taimanov

Jeroen Bosch



6.♕d3!?

'With 5...♕c7 Black has committed his own queen at an early stage of the game. Somehow we all accept this, knowing how well-placed her majesty often is on c7 in the Sicilian.'

Over the last couple of years we have witnessed a trend to combat Sicilians with early ♕d3 or ♕f3 moves. Avoiding the main lines, and the guilty pleasure of playing a forbidden move (weren't we all taught not to touch our queens early?) are part of the attraction, perhaps. However, I don't want to delve into any Freudian discussion a la Reuben Fine, but would much rather argue that playing 6. ♕d3 in the Taimanov has a definite point!

After **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 ♕c7** we have arrived at one of the main branches of the Taimanov (5...a6 is the other starting point, when 6.♘xc6 bxc6 7.♕d3 would be your SOS-answer – but more about that later). Now most games continue with 6.♗e2, 6.♗e3 or 6.g3, but we will look at:

6.♕d3!?

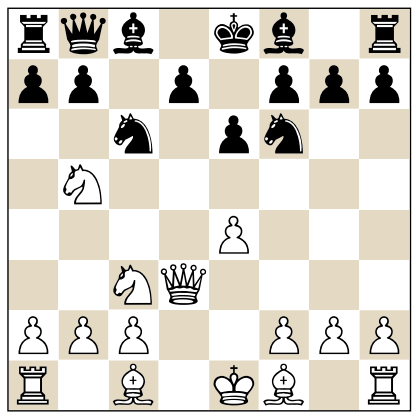
This was first played in 2014 by Vallejo in his win over Adhiban. The Spanish GM scored another win with it, and subsequently his line was played by Motylev, Bruzon and Rapport, to name but a few other strong GMs. So far, White has scored tremendously, but statistics are not that insightful with less than 50 games played. We can be sure that 6.♕d3 is not the refutation of the Taimanov, but it makes for a nice change, and the idea behind the move is excellent. With 5... ♕c7 Black has committed his own queen at an early stage of the game. Somehow we all accept this, knowing how well-placed her majesty often is on c7 in the Sicilian. Now, Vallejo's idea is to challenge the early placement of the black queen by continuing (after either ♘db5 or ♘xc6) with ♕g3!.

Black usually plays **6...a6** (Variation B), while **6...♘f6** (Variation A) is a lesser option in my opinion.

In a way I am surprised that Black hasn't played 6...♘xd4 more often, when 6.♕d3 has after all lost White a tempo. However, it is true that her majesty is in a commanding position after 7.♕xd4 a6 8.♗e3. If we look more closely, we see that we have now transposed to 6.♗e3 a6 7.♕d2 ♘xd4 8.♕xd4, a line that favours White somewhat, although the position is of characteristic Sicilian complexity, of course.

Variation A

The natural **6...♘f6** allows White to execute his main idea with **7.♘db5! ♕b8**

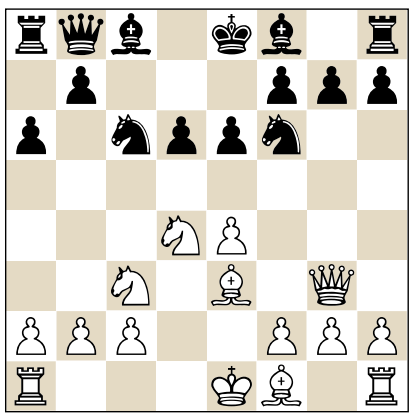


NEW IN CHESS

And here she comes: **8.♕g3! d6** Trading queens leads to a kind of Sveshnikov gone horribly wrong: 8...♕xg3 9.hxg3 ♔d8 10.♗f4 e5 11.♗g5 a6 12.♘a3 b5 13.♘d5, and 8...e5 loses a pawn by force: 9.♘d5 ♘xd5 10.exd5 a6 11.dxc6 axb5 12.cxb7 ♗xb7 13.♗xb5.

9.♗e3 a6 Black must drive the knight back, as otherwise he will succumb to the pressure on d6: 9...♗e7? 10.0-0-0 0-0 11.♘xd6 ♘h5 12.♕h3 ♗xd6 13.♕xh5 ♗e5 gave Black no compensation for the lost pawn after 14.♗c5 ♖d8 15.♖xd8+ ♘xd8 16.♗b5 g6 17.♕h4 ♕c7 18.♗e7 ♘c6 19.♗xc6 ♕xc6 20.♗f6, with a winning position in Rapport-Franco, Spain 2016.

10.♘d4



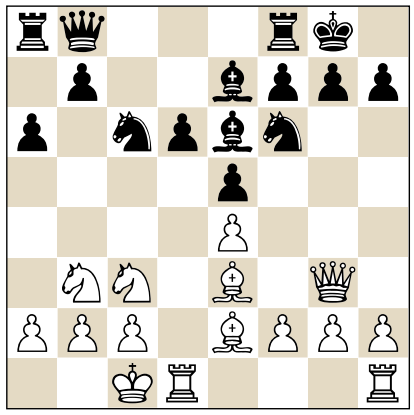
We are looking at a 'normal' sort of Najdorf/Scheveningen position in which the white queen has been magically transferred from d1 to g3. That's great news, since White will often play ♕d1-f3-g3 or ♕d1-e1-g3 anyway in those lines. Practice does confirm that White is up for preference here.

10...♗d7 Perhaps the best move, planning an early ...b5-b4.

– 10...h5!? White should now play 11.f3!? h4 12.♕f2 rather than allowing Black to harass his queen with 11.♗e2 h4 12.♕g5 ♕c7 13.0-0-0 ♗d7 14.f4 ♖c8 15.♗f3 b5 16.♖d2 ♘a5, and Black was better (though White won) in Georgiadis-Jumabayev, Dubai 2014.

– 10...♕c7 11.f4 b5 12.♘xc6 ♕xc6 13.e5 ♘d5 (White is also better after 13...♘d7 14.♗d3 ♗b7 15.0-0 and 13...dxe5 14.fxe5 ♘d7 15.♗d3 ♗b7 16.♗e4 ♕c7 17.♗xb7 ♕xb7 18.0-0) 14.♘xd5 exd5 (14...♕xd5 15.♗e2) 15.♗d3 dxe5 16.fxe5 ♗e6 17.0-0, and the queen on g3 greatly annoys Black on the kingside (Brkic-Schachinger, Bad Gleichenberg 2014).

– 10...e5!? was analysed by Delchev and Semkov in their book *The Safest Sicilian* (Chess Stars, 2014). The authors deserve credit for even getting this far, since at the time the game Vallejo-Adhiban was the only known game with 6.♕d3, and that game had continued with 6...a6!. Their main line runs 11.♘b3 ♗e6 12.0-0-0 ♗e7 13.♗e2 (13.f3!?) 13...0-0 14.♗h6 ♘e8 15.♘d5 ♔h8, with a verdict of equal by Delchev/Semkov, which is fair enough. However, I feel that after 13...0-0



White preserves an edge with 14.f4! in all lines:

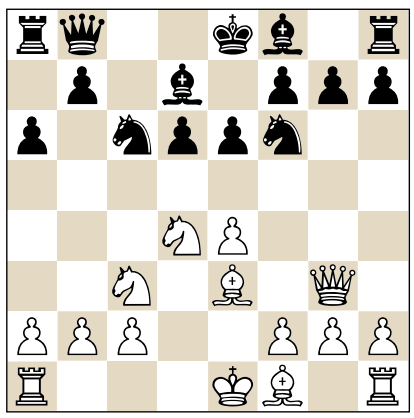
– 14...b5 15.f5 ♗c4 16.♗h6 ♘e8 17.♗xc4 bxc4 18.♘d2 ♔h8 19.♗e3.

– 14...♖c8 15.f5.

– 14...exf4 15.♗xf4 ♘e5 16.♘d4.

In practice nobody has tried 10...e5 so far.

To understand Black's idea after 10...♗d7, please see my comments below this diagram.



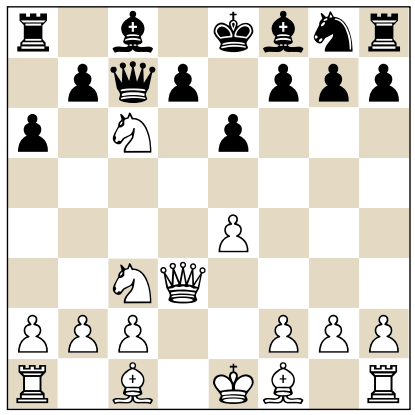
In Mons-Movsesian, Germany 2014, there followed 11.0-0-0 b5 12.f3?! ♘xd4 13.♗xd4 b4!, and Black was doing well, but the simple 12.♘xc6 ♗xc6 13.f3 is somewhat better for White in my opinion.

Next, in Motylev-Bukavshin, Chita 2015, 11.f4 b5 12.♗d3 b4 13.♘b1 (13.♘ce2) 13...g6 14.♘d2 ♗g7 15.♘e2 ♘h5 16.♕f3 ♗xb2 17.♖b1 ♗g7 18.♘c4 yielded White sufficient compensation for the pawn. However, 15...0-0 would have been satisfactory for Black.

So I think that White should either play 11.f3 or 11.0-0-0 b5 12.♘xc6 ♗xc6 13.f3.

Variation B

6...a6 This is the main response to 6.♕d3. **7.♘xc6**



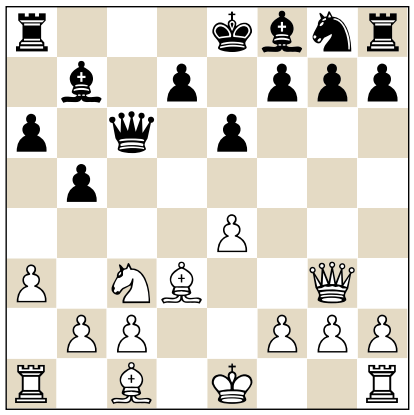
Trading knights is essential to Vallejo's idea, because he wants to continue with 8.♕g3 after the recapture with either the b- or the d-pawn. That's probably why Adhiban took back on c6 with the queen in the stem game.

We will look at all recaptures in an ascending order of importance.

Variation B1

7...♕xc6 However, in this case the switch to the kingside is good, too! **8.♕g3 b5** At the recent Olympiad Ladva played 8...♘f6 versus Bruzon, but after 9.♗d3 d6 10.0-0 b5 11.♖e1 ♗e7 the Cuban GM continued energetically with 12.e5! dxe5 13.♘e4, which yielded him a winning position after 13...♗b7 14.♕xg7! (not afraid of g2-ghosts along the g-file and the diagonal!) 14...0-0-0 15.♗g5! ♘d5 (or 15...♖hg8 16.♕xf7 ♖xg5 17.♕xe7) 16.♗xe7 ♘xe7 17.♕xf7, and White won in Bruzon-Ladva, Baku 2016.

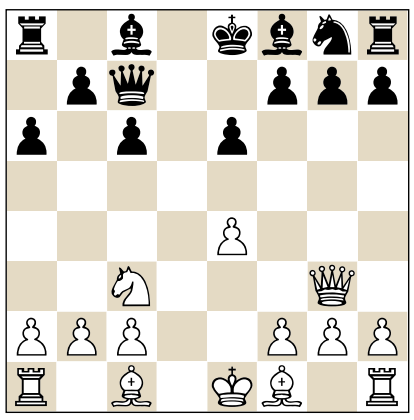
9.a3 ♗b7 10.♗d3



The stem game now went:
10...♘f6 Another Baku try was 10...♘e7, but this is well-met by 11.h4!, when Black has trouble developing: 11...d5 12.a4 (12.0-0!) 12...b4 13.♘b5! ♖d8 14.e5 ♘f5, and now the strategically correct 15.♗xf5! exf5 16.♘d4 rather than 15.♕f4 (Blagojevic-Haast, Baku Olympiad 2016), which could have been met by 15...d4! 16.f3 ♕c5. **11.0-0 d6 12.♖e1 ♗e7 13.♗g5!?** 13.♕xg7 ♖g8 14.♕h6 0-0-0, with some compensation. **13...h6?! 14.♗d2 ♔f8 15.a4! bxa4** 15...b4 16.♘a2 a5 17.c3. **16.♖xa4** which obviously favoured White, who was better on the queenside and on the kingside, in Vallejo-Adhiban, Gibraltar 2014.

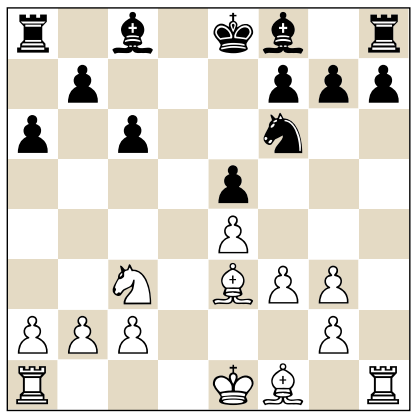
Variation B2

The solid choice is:
7...dxc6 8.♕g3



8...♕xg3 Not 8...e5?! 9.f4! b5 10.♗e2 h5 11.fxe5 h4 12.♕f2 ♘e7 13.e6 ♗xe6 14.♗f4 ♕a5 15.♕c5 ♖c8 16.♗d6 ♘g6 17.e5, with a superior position in Michalik-A.Horvath, Prague 2016.

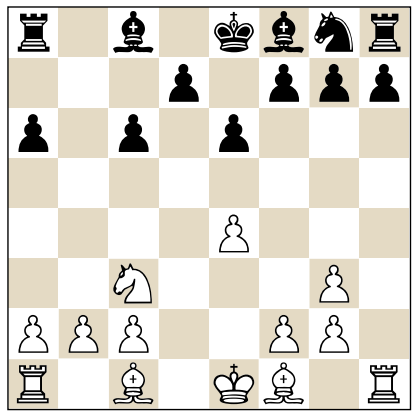
9.hxg3 e5 White is a mite better in this ending but converting it into something real isn't all that easy. Trading queens and settling for a slightly worse but solid position is generally a sensible strategy when confronted by an opening surprise like 6.♕d3.
10.♗e3 ♘f6 11.f3



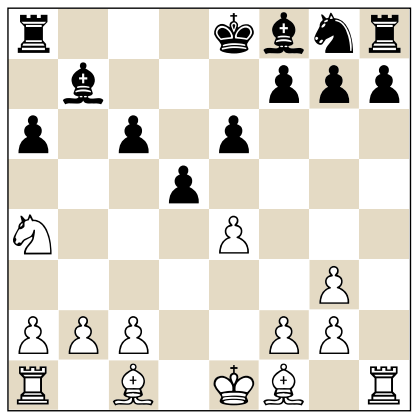
Two practical examples from the diagrammed position:
– 11...♘d7 12.g4 ♗c5 13.♔f2 (13.♘d1! ♔e7 14.a4 a5 15.g5) 13...♗xe3+ 14.♔xe3 f6 15.a4 a5 16.♗c4 ♔e7 was equal in Dmitrenko-Gevorgyan, Tashkent 2015.
11...♗e6 12.g4 ♘d7 13.g5!? a5 14.g3 ♗c5 15.♔f2 b5 16.f4 g6 17.♗h3 ♗xe3+ (17...♗xh3! 18.♖xh3 f6 19.gxf6 ♗xe3+ 20.♔xe3 ♘xf6=) 18.♔xe3 ♘c5?! 19.♖ad1 ♖d8 20.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 21.a3 a4? 22.♗xe6 ♘xe6 23.♘a2 favoured White in Korley-Stripunsky, ICC 2014.

Variation B3

7...bxc6 Recapturing towards the centre is the most enterprising way to continue. White's reply is no surprise.
8.♕g3! Once again I must point out that a tricky transposition has occurred! This position is also reached via 5...a6 6.♘xc6 bxc6 7.♕d3 ♕c7 8.♕g3!.
8...♕xg3 Black is ill-advised to spurn the queen swap. After 8...d6 9.♗e2 ♘f6 10.0-0 ♘d7 11.♗e3 ♖b8 12.b3 g6 13.♘a4! White already had a comfortable edge in Haast-Padmini, Baku 2016.
9.hxg3 It is common knowledge that in the Sicilian the endgame often favours Black, but here this is not the case. Black's queenside is a bit weak, and the half-open h-file is useful, too.

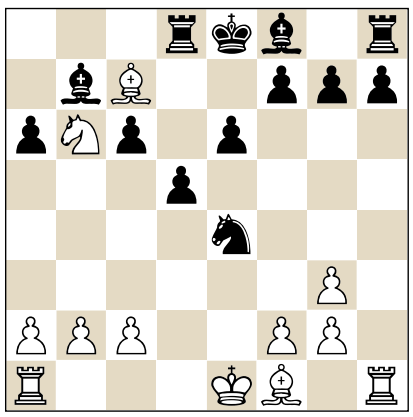


Black now usually stakes a claim in the centre with:
9...d5 9...♖b8!? 10.e5 (10.g4 d5, as in Karjakin-Mamedyarov, Baku 2009, transposes to the next note) 10...f6 11.f4 d5 12.exd6 ♗xd6 13.♘e4 ♗e7 14.b3 ♘h6 15.♗b2 ♘f5 was agreed drawn in Rios-Kunte, Barcelona 2011, but White is doing well after 16.♔f2.
9...♗b4 10.♗d2 d5 11.♘a4!? ♗xd2+ 12.♔xd2 ♖b8?! (12...♘f6) 13.e5 f6 14.♖e1 fxe5 15.♖xe5 ♘f6 16.♗d3 was a pleasant edge in Palac-Jakovljevic, Prijedor 2015.
10.♘a4 With the threat of 11.♘b6, while also freeing the c-pawn for a possible advance and aiming to control some important dark squares (b6 and c5). Karjakin's favourite is 10.g4 ♖b8 11.g5 f6 12.gxf6 ♘xf6, but neither against Mamedyarov (Baku 2009) nor against Andreikin (Khanty-Mansiysk 2014) did he obtain much.
Likewise, 10.♗f4 ♘f6 11.♘a4!? ♗b4+ (11...♘d7) 12.c3 ♗a5 13.exd5 cxd5 14.♗e5 ♗d7! is a rather tiny edge at best (Kasimdzhanov-Rublevsky, Sochi 2006).
10...♖b8 Preventing 11.♘b6, but I am wondering whether Black shouldn't just allow it with 10...♗b7.

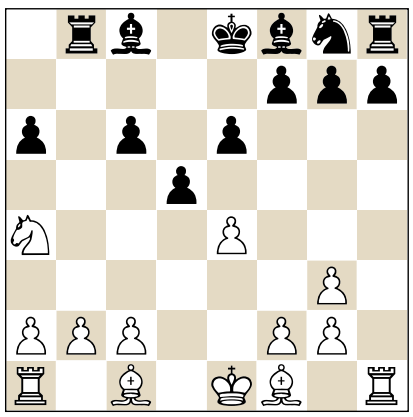


Admittedly, this looks scary after 11.♘b6 (11.♗f4 ♘f6 12.exd5 – 12.♘b6

♖d8 is the next note – 12...♘xd5 13.♗d2 c5 was just equal in Nepomniachtchi-Laznicka, Plovdiv 2010) 11...♖d8 12.♗f4, threatening to win an exchange. However, Black should ignore the threat with 12...♘f6! (12...♗d6? 13.♗xd6 ♖xd6 14.e5 ♖d8 15.♘a4! a5 16.♘c5 was a huge positional edge in Nepomniachtchi-Pikula, Budva 2009, while 12...♗c5 13.♗c7 ♗xb6 14.♗xb6 ♖c8 15.♗d4 was also clearly worse for Black, Escobar Forero-Tovio, El Bagre 2010) 13.♗c7 ♘xe4!.

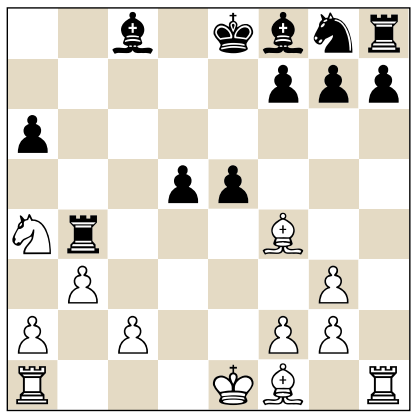


Now 14.♗xd8 ♔xd8 15.♗d3 ♘xf2 (15...♘c5!?) 16.♔xf2 ♗c5+ 17.♔e2 ♗xb6 18.♖xh7 ♖xh7 19.♗xh7 ♔e7 does not cause Black any problems. So, it's better for White to keep his options open with 14.♗d3 ♘f6 (14...f5 15.♗xd8 ♔xd8 16.♘a4 c5 is perhaps a tiny edge for White, Torosyan-Hayrapetyan, Poti 2011) 15.c4 d4, D.Petrosian-Vardanian, Jermuk 2010. Not grabbing material is probably the best chance to preserve an edge: 16.f3 ♗d6 17.♗xd6! ♖xd6 18.c5 ♖d8 19.♘c4, with decent compensation for the pawn.



11.exd5 cxd5 12.♗f4 White gains a tempo, but Black sort of retrieves it on the next move, when he can advance his central e-pawn.

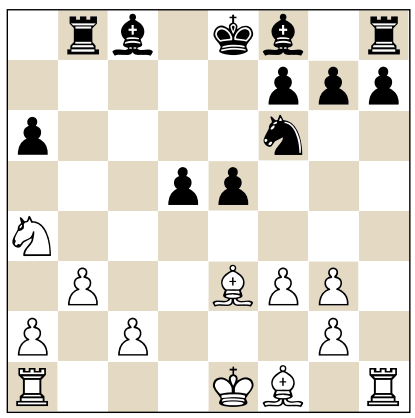
12...♖b4 13.b3 e5 Not 13...♗d7? 14.♗xa6 e5 15.♗d2 ♖b8 16.0-0 ♗d6 Vallejo-Rubio Mejia, Linares 2015. While the position is still complex, a pawn is a pawn!



14.♗e3 The most popular move in practice – yes, this endgame has occurred a number of times! However, the course of the game Seps-Shamima, Tromsø 2014, was quite instructive, too: 14.♗d2 ♖b8 15.f3 ♘e7 16.♔f2 ♘c6 17.g4 ♗e7 18.c4! d4 19.♗d3 ♘b4 20.♗xb4 (20.♗e4) 20...♗xb4 21.♖h5 ♗d6 (21...f6) 22.♖ah1 h6 23.c5 ♗c7 24.g5 White kept her edge throughout and is substantially better after 24.g5. Obviously 14.♗xe5?? ♖e4+ is not on.

14...♘f6 15.f3 A transposition is possible via 15.c3 ♖b8 16.f3.

15...♖b8

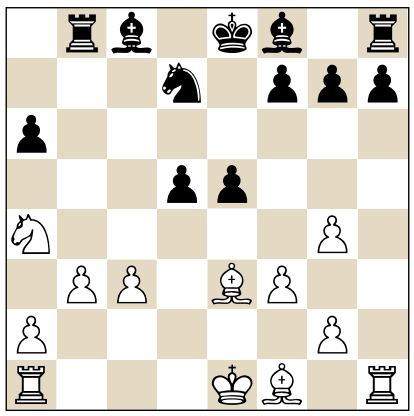


What is more important: White's half-open h-file and his queenside majority, or Black's pawn centre? Practice suggests that White's chances must be held in higher regard. The possibility to play on both flanks makes his play easier than Black's. Moreover, any further advance in the centre (...d5-d4 or ...e5-e4) in principle only weakens important squares.

16.c3 Or 16.g4 d4, the move that 16.c3 is designed to prevent after all: 17.♗d2 ♗d6 18.♗c4 ♗b7 19.0-0-0!? 0-0 20.g5 ♘d5 21.♖h4 (simply doubling rooks, to take on h7) 21...♖fc8 (21...♘e7 22.♖dh1 e4 23.♖xh7 ♘g6 24.f4 ♗c8, and now White preserves an edge with the beautiful 25.♘c3!. 21...g6 is met by 22.c3!) 22.♖dh1, and White won in Sengupta-J.van Foreest, Dieren 2014.

16...♘d7 16...♗e7 17.g4 (this space-gaining move is always annoying for Black) 17...d4? 18.cxd4 ♘d5 19.♗d2 (19.♗g1!) 19...exd4 20.♗c4 ♘e3 21.♗xe3 dxe3 22.♔e2, with a white advantage in Rios-Prince, Montcada 2016.

17.g4



There are two practical examples:
– 17...g6 18.♗d3 ♗g7 19.0-0-0 0-0 20.♖h4 (White gangs up on the h-pawn) 20...♖e8 21.g5 ♗b7 22.♖dh1 and White was successful in Blomqvist-Roser, Barcelona 2015.
– 17...♗b7 18.♔f2 ♖c8 19.♖e1 (19.♗d3) 19...g6 20.♖h3!? ♗g7 21.c4! 0-0 22.cxd5 ♖c2+, Zhou-Dragun, London 2014, and now 23.♖e2! ♖fc8 24.d6 ♗f8 25.♘b2 ♗xd6 26.♘c4 ♖xe2+ 27.♗xe2, and White keeps a pleasant edge.

In conclusion, 6.♕d3 is an excellent way to confuse your opponent in the Taimanov. The idea is to switch the queen to the kingside and create a vis-à-vis with the queen on c7. Black must watch out for a few tricky transpositions and is more or less forced to settle for a slightly inferior endgame. ■

Judit Polgar

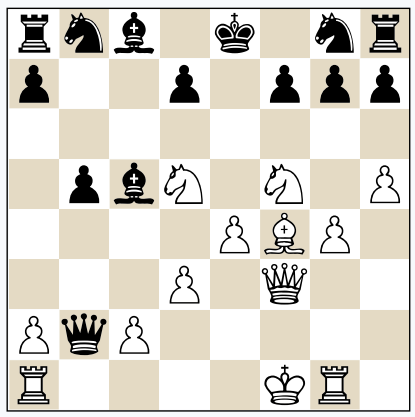
On the shoulders of giants

From her earliest years **JUDIT POLGAR** was influenced by the stars of the past. One of her first inspirations was attacking genius Adolf Anderssen.

Much of my knowledge accumulated over the years is based on carefully studying the best games of the greatest classical and contemporary players.

When showing how some of my heroes influenced my play, it is right to start with players from the romantic period, since playing over their games and solving their combinations were the main part of my training around the age of five.

Adolf Anderssen is widely known as a brilliant combinative player, but I find his ability to prepare the decisive blows with 'peaceful' moves, ignoring material losses on remote areas of the board, no less fascinating. The everfamous 'Immortal game' is no exception, even though later analysis proved it imperfect.

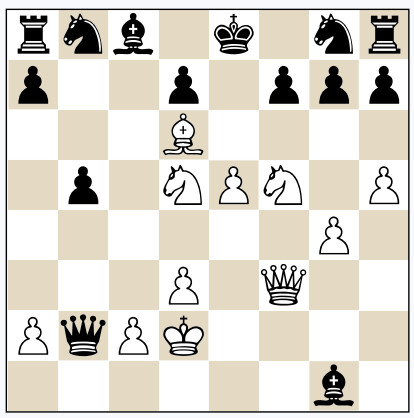


Anderssen-Kieseritzky
London 1851
position after 17...♕xb2

One glance at the position is enough to reveal that Black's almost undeveloped army will not stand the attack. The simplest continuation was 18.♖e1, but Anderssen started building up a hidden mating net like a high-class architect.

18.♗d6?! (!!) White tightens the noose around the black king's neck and plans to block the black queen's line to the g7-square with e4-e5, followed by the mating combination ♘xg7+ ...♔d8, ♕f6!!+ ...♘xf6, ♗e7 mate! This imaginative vision with the back rank in flames does not only highlight White's courage but also his intuitive play and strategic thinking.

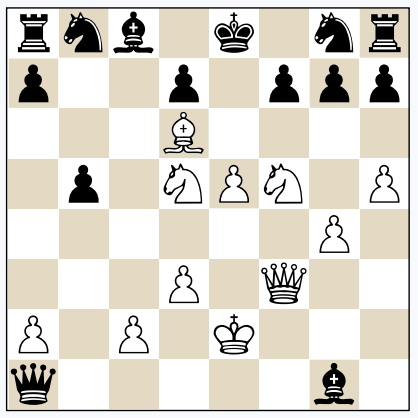
18...♗xg1? Allowing White to carry out his 'little plan' unhindered. Steinitz was the first commentator to suggest 18...♕xa1+ 19.♔e2 ♕b2! 20.♔d2 ♗xg1 21.e5



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

This position is almost identical with that in which Kieseritzky resigned, but the white king's exposure saves Black: 21...♗a6 22.♘c7+ ♔d8 23.♘xa6 (White is threatening 24.♗c7+, followed by 25.♘d6+, with mate in at most three moves, and the threat ♕xa8 also looks deadly) 23...♗b6!! (a calm move no less artistic than Anderssen's 18.♗d6. Black defends c7 and prepares counterplay on the dark squares) 24.♕xa8 ♗a5+ 25.♔e3 ♕c1+, with a perpetual.

19.e5 ♕xa1+ 20.♔e2

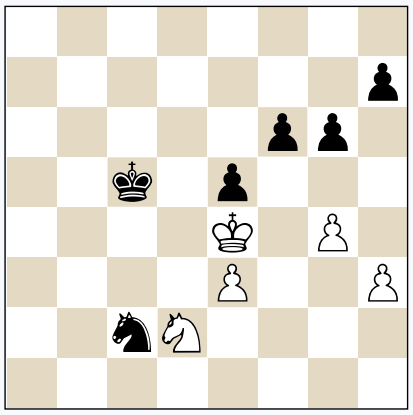


Everything is set for the final attack, and having failed to find a satisfactory defence, Kieseritzky took his last step to 'Immortality' by resigning.

I am surprised the game didn't end with mate, because the main pattern is etched deeply into my memory. My parents probably used it as a test.

Here are some lines justifying Kieseritzky's decision: 20...♗a6 (this exposes the bishop, but the more 'cautious' 20...♗b7 fails to clear the king's escape via c8-b7: 20...♗b7 21.♘xg7+ ♔d8 22.♕xf7 ♘h6 23.♘e6+!. The point is that on 23...♔c8, 24.♘e7 mates. 20...f6 does not delay the mate for too long either: 21.♘xg7+ ♔f7 22.♘xf6) 21.♘c7+ ♔d8 22.♘xa6 White's king is safer than in the saving line above and Black is helpless against the aforementioned threats. If 22...♕xa2, defending f7 in order to escape with the king to f8, 23.♘b4, followed by ♕xa8, wins.

Such wonderful games left a clear trace in my style. At the age of eight, I was able to perceive a mating net even in what looked like a technical position.



Ivalinov-Polgar
Targoviste 1984

In knight endings, an extra pawn frequently ensures a win, even when there are pawns on one wing only. My next move looks like a mere defence against g4-g5, which would draw comfortably, but I also had a hidden plan in mind.

43...♔d6 44.h4? A natural move, gaining space and aiming to reduce the pawn number with a well-timed h4-h5, but at the same time the decisive mistake.

If White had realized what was cooking for him, he would have withdrawn his king or controlled e1 with 44.♘f3, maintaining saving chances in a technical endgame.

44...♘e1!! Taking away the king's retreating squares in similar style as Anderssen's ♗d6 and creating the brutal threat 45...♔e6, followed by 46...f6-f5, with mate. The mating idea is so surprising in the endgame that my opponent did not seem to have spotted the danger before my next move.

This was the kind of move I used to play with great delight, but also with some physical effort. At the age of eight I could not reach the back rank while seated, so I had to get up and stretch whenever I promoted a pawn or moved a piece deep in enemy territory.

45.h5 White could still have avoided mate with 45.♘f3, even though this would have cost him the knight and the game anyway after 45...f5+! .

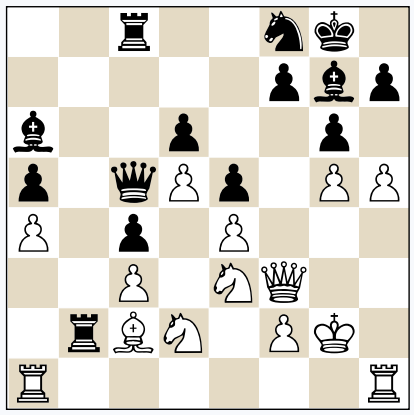
45...♔e6! Things are clear now, but my opponent kindly allowed me to work out my idea until its end:

46.hxg6 hxg6 47.♘f3 f5+ 48.gxf5+ gxf5

Mate.

'At the age of eight I had to get up and stretch whenever I promoted a pawn or moved a piece deep in enemy territory.'

Decades later I occasionally managed to launch attacks in the style of Anderssen, starting with quiet moves and ignoring material losses on the other wing.

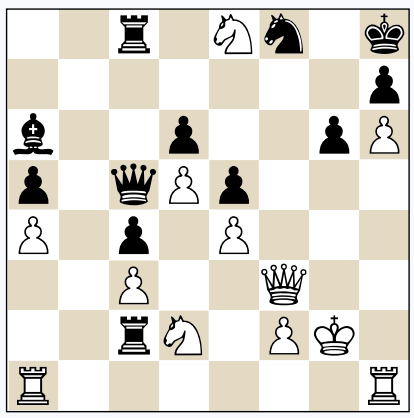


Polgar-Sokolov
Wijk aan Zee 2005
position after 30...♖b2

Here, too, we notice a net building up around the black king, while Black's queenside counterplay is equivalent to Kieseritzky's rook-grabbing adventure.

31.♘g4! Abandoning the defence with second-rank minor pieces much like Anderssen did with his rooks.

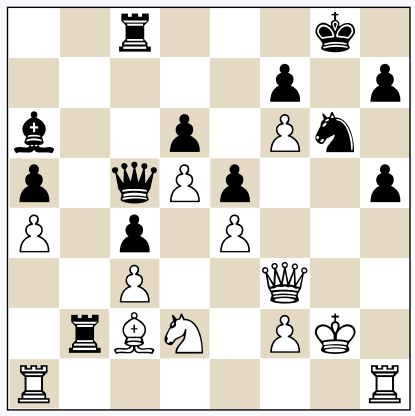
31...gxh5 31...♖xc2 32.h6 looks hopeless, but things are more complicated than I had first thought. 32...♗h8 loses to 33.♘f6+ ♗xf6 34.♕xf6, mating soon. I calculated 32...f5 33.gxf6 ♗xf6 (another surprising mating picture would arise after 33...♗h8 34.f7 mate) 34.♘xf6+ ♔h8 35.♘e8!



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

In view of the threats 36.♕xf8 mate, and 36.♕f6+ (or 36.♕f7), followed by 37.♕g7 mate, I thought the game would be over, but Black could still kick: 35...♔g8! 36.♕f6 ♕a7 37.♘xd6! ♖xd2. The only winning continuation is the quiet move 38.♖h3!!, threatening 39.♖f3, followed by 40.♘f7, and mate on either g7 or h8. 38...♖d3 (forced) 39.♖xd3 cxd3 40.♘xc8 ♗xc8 41.♖d1 ♗a6 42.♕xe5, followed by the unstoppable advance of the central pawn mass.

32.♘f6+ ♗xf6 33.gxf6 White plans to continue the attack with the quiet moves 34.♕xh5 and 35.♕h6, followed by mate on g7. **33...♘g6** Parrying 34.♕xh5 in view of 34...♘f4+. Piece-grabbing won't help: 33...♖xc2 34.♕xh5 ♖xd2 35.♕g5+ ♘g6 36.♕xd2 ♘f4+ 37.♔f3. At the cost of an exchange, Black has managed to cut off my queen's path to the kingside. But two rooks and the f6-pawn are enough to finish Black off soon.



34.♔f1!! All these peaceful moves leave White a few tempi short of threatening mate, but intuition combined with calculation convinced me that the queen would get to h6 sooner or later. **34...h4** If 34...♔f8 35.♕xh5 ♖xc2 36.♕xh7 ♔e8 37.♕g8+ ♘f8 fails to protect the king due to 38.♕xf8+! ♔xf8 39.♖h8 mate. And if 34...♘f4, the queen can choose a different route to h6: 35.♕g3+ ♘g6 36.♕g5, winning. **35.♕h5 ♔h8 36.♘f3!** Threatening 37.♕h6 ♖g8 38.♘g5 or 37.♘g5 ♘f8 38.♕h6. **36...♖xc2 37.♖h2 ♖xf2+!?** Preparing a small trap. **38.♖xf2 ♘f4 39.♕xh4 ♖g8** Hoping for 40.♘g5 ♖xg5 41.♕xg5 ♕xf2!+. **40.♖h2!** Ivan resigned without giving me the chance to show my last trick: 40...h5 41.♕xh5+! ♘xh5 42.♖xh5 mate! ■

MOSCOW

Nepomniachtchi unshakeable in Tal Memorial

Super-tournament revived in Moscow Museum of Russian Impressionism

A determined Ian Nepomniachtchi seems to be heading straight for the world's Top-10. In the wake of a strong showing at the Olympiad, the Russian confidently claimed the 10th Tal Memorial. Still, the fight for first place was close till the very last day, as runner-up **ANISH GIRI** explains in his impressions from Moscow.

While the glory days of total domination of the so-called Soviet Chess School are long behind us, Mother Russia is still doing an excellent job at keeping her chess culture very much alive on all of its territory and beyond. The highest-rated chess country in the world continues to host prestigious events, and the chess fans must have been delighted to see the return of the Tal Memorial.

An event loved by so many and won by so few, the Memorial of the Magician from Riga had been a part of the chess calendar for almost a decade when it suddenly seemed to be in danger of disappearing. In 2014, the 9th edition was a blitz tournament, won by ultra-fast Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, and in 2015 there was no tournament at all. But this year, the Tal Memorial was back, and the 10th edition was a super-tournament again (all 2700-plus players and Kramnik with a majestic 2808) with a classical time-control.

Perhaps thanks to Sergey Karjakin's tweets, but more likely thanks to his convincing victory in the Candidates' tournament in Moscow last March, the drop in the oil price that is seriously affecting the Russian economy may have been compensated for by the enthusiasm and love for chess that is so deeply ingrained in Russian culture. Quite soon after the Candidates' tournament the word on the street was that the Tal Memorial would be back in its most glorious form and with a respectable prize fund – which turned out to be $200,000.

MARIA EMELIANOVA

A look that says it all. Ian Nepomniachtchi is on a roll, and the 26-year-old Russian grandmaster is thoroughly enjoying it.

Perhaps the organizers regretted that they started talking to me around that time – well before I, to the surprise of even my biggest enemies, dropped over 30 rating points in two consecutive events, which made me barely eligible for a tournament of this calibre. I don't know whether it is my fierce Tal-like playing style, my pretty eyes, or perhaps the fact that the best of the West were playing in the Isle of Man at around the same time, but the organizers found a spot for me regardless, for which I am most grateful.

To give you an idea of the field of players, it might help to first explain the anti-cheating measures that were in force (not!) in the tournament venue, the museum of Russian Impressionism. (A brief pause for the smart-aleck art lovers who wonder if Russian Impressionism exists – oh yes, it does – and applause for the Russian Chess Federation for continuing the marvellous tradition of chess in a museum started with the Anand-Gelfand match in the Tretyakov Gallery in 2012, which strengthens the image of chess as a lofty occupation.) So, the anti-cheating measures... To say that there were none would be saying nothing. On the trip to the bathroom – a must for any respected grandmaster – it was a real challenge not to overhear supporters talking about the games or glance at a laptop of your choice – from a member of the media, or a friend or relative of a player in the cafeteria just outside the playing room. Now this might sound like a problem, given the current trend of heavy security and pseudo-security, but with these participants and their respect for each other no such problem existed and no one voiced any concerns.

As you will find a tournament table in this article, there is no need to list all the participants, but as you will have understood it was a field that any tournament would have been proud of. A fine blend of ex-World Champions, professors, artists and, simply put, geniuses, some recognized, others less so by their contemporaries; in short a company of people in which I felt pretty uneasy. Add to that that my companion for the tournament was the editor-in-chief of this magazine – a virulent Twitter hater and a fierce art lover (although a good person at heart!) – and you can understand what I had to endure in Moscow.

The event opened with a blitz tournament to determine the pairings. Chess players tend to be fond of sweets, so giving a Snickers or Bounty bar for first place in the blitz and splitting two Twix fingers between second and third place would be an incentive, but allowing the top finishers to choose their own pairing numbers proved more than enough inspiration for all the participants to fight to the best of their abilities.

Shakhriyar Mamedyarov displayed great form and steamrolled the blitz with an awesome 7½ from 9. Yours truly also ended with a plus-score, much to the surprise of Levon Aronian who, despite his surprise, contributed directly to my score.

I started the blitz tournament with poor play and no luck in the first half, but had a lot of luck (although still very poor play) in the second. Still it gave me an extra game with White. One of my dinner companions that evening, Nepo (people usually stop writing Ian Nepomniachtchi's name after four letters because of the chaos that ensues around letter number 8), was quite satisfied too. Little did I know that my hanging a rook against him in a winning position was a little inside joke of a higher force that already knew about our fate in the last round of the real tournament. But before that last round there were the first eight.

In the very first round it became clear that in the wake of the Olympiad, Evgeny Tomashevsky was still completely out (an expression that a previous trainer of mine likes to use for people who are completely out) and Nepo still had the wind in his back. In the only decisive game of the round he took out Tomashevsky in a mere 23 moves.

I must have ordered something very special for dinner after Round 1, in which I got nowhere against Vishy Anand, who showed a great defensive effort in a very unpleasant position. Suddenly, I beat Gelfand, Tomashevsky and Svidler on the trot, and although Nepo also worked on his score by beating Kramnik, I found myself in the sole lead after four rounds.

'People usually stop writing Ian Nepomniachtchi's name after four letters because of the chaos that ensues around letter number 8'

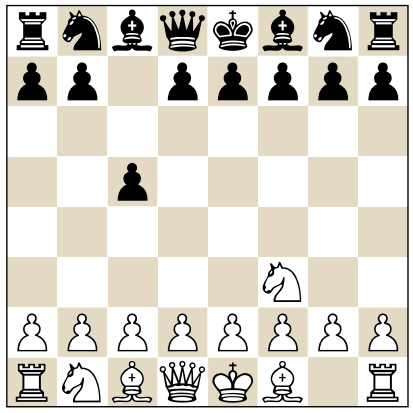
NOTES BY
Anish Giri

Peter Svidler
Anish Giri
Moscow 2016 (4)
English, Symmetrical Variation

As said, I had won two games in a row before this one, which is quite a streak for my standards. I felt confident going into this game, but having lost my last two games to Peter because of over-confidence, I decided to be more alert this time. Anyhow, I didn't know what to expect from Peter.

1.♘f3 c5

I had played this against him in blitz, but he didn't appear to expect it anyway. Now that I have won a couple of nice games in the Sicilian with Black, I can play this move with a broad smile on my face, looking forward to 2.e4.



2.g3

In this variation White will be unable to get the d4 break under favourable circumstances, so essentially it signals a closed, double-edged fight. 2.c3! is the state of the art opening news from Aronian. Here I haven't found any advantage for Black. 2...♘f6 3.d4 was seen in four Aronian-Vachier-Lagrave games and one game Aronian-Giri from the blitz section of this tournament, which I won because of pure luck.

2...♘c6 3.♗g2 g6 4.c4

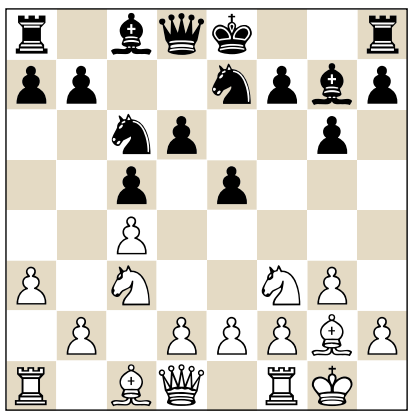
In case of 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♗g7 it's important that the knight is still on g8, posing some questions to its white counterpart on d4.

4...♗g7 5.♘c3 d6 6.0-0 e5

6...e6!? is another set-up, which is more trendy, more flexible, but less ambitious.

7.a3 The move orders are quite subtle here.

7...♘ge7 7...a5 is the lazy way to go about the b4 semi-threat.



8.d3

8.b4!? is critical, and during the game I felt I would know and remember more than my opponent; but if he had come prepared, I would probably have had reasons to be somewhat worried. The variations that arise are very complex.

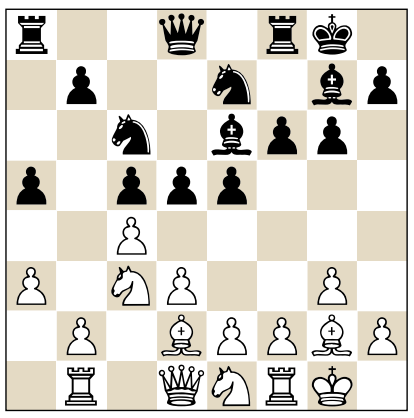
8...0-0 9.♖b1 a5 10.♗g5

White would love to be in time for the ♘e1-c2-e3 manoeuvre, but he isn't, so this move is a clever attempt to at least provoke some concessions. 10.♘e1 ♗e6 11.♘c2 d5! 12.cxd5 ♘xd5 13.♘e3 ♘de7 is comfortable for Black.

10...f6 11.♗d2 ♗e6 12.♘e1

Now Black has an extra move and can prepare ...d5, but Peter's 14.♕b3 looked at the very least double-edged to me, so I decided not to be too cautious here.

12...d5



MARIA EMELIANOVA

'On the final day, Levon also knocked me out, hands down, in the dressing competition.' See for yourself: Vladimir Kramnik (7th), Levon Aronian (3rd), Anish Giri (2nd), Ian Nepomniachtchi (1st) and Vishy Anand (4th) at the prize-giving.

13.cxd5

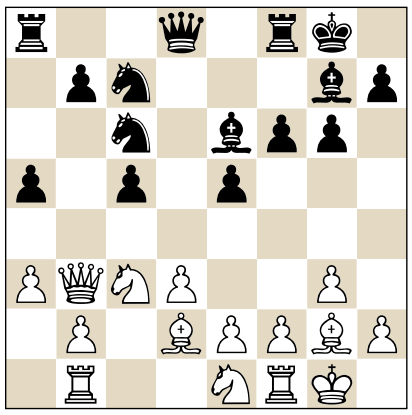
13.♘a4!? is a surprising idea, which leads to simplifications after 13...b6 14.b4! axb4 15.axb4 cxb4 16.♗xb4 ♘xb4 17.♖xb4 ♖b8 18.♕b1 dxc4 19.dxc4 f5 20.♘c2 ♗xc4!? and a draw was agreed in some random game because of 21.♖xc4 b5!.

13...♘xd5 14.♕b3

It probably was obvious for Peter, too, that this cannot be all that great for White, but otherwise Black gets good play without having to calculate even one variation.

14...♘c7

14...a4!? was also very tempting. I didn't see why I wasn't better here, but I liked my original plan of 14...♘c7 a lot too. After 14...a4, play can continue 15.♘xa4 (best. After 15.♕xb7 ♘a5 16.♕b5 ♘b3! Black is going to win some material) 15...♘d4 16.♕d1 ♘xe2+ 17.♕xe2 ♖xa4 18.f4!, with some counterplay. Maybe it will be enough to maintain some sort of balance, but Black is clearly comfortable here.

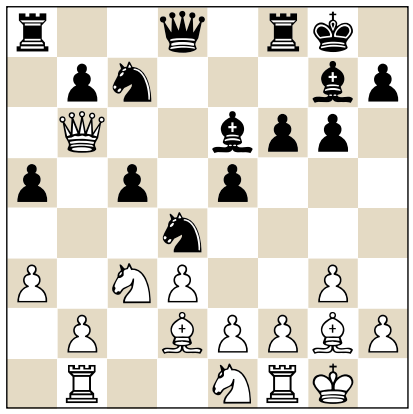


15.♕b6!?

A clever attempt to confuse me, but I was actually expecting this move. 15.♕xb7 ♘d4 also looks good for Black, with apparent compensation. White's queen is badly misplaced. A sample variation: 16.♘f3 ♖b8 17.♕e4. Here I calculated some forced variations starting with 17 ...f5 or 17 ...♗f5, but it's even stronger to play it slow: 17...♕d7!? 18.♖fc1 ♖fc8!? 19.♗e1 ♘e8! 20.♕e3 ♘d6 21.♘d2 f5!, with ...f4 and ...c4 breaks coming, when the pawn deficit is not felt.

15...♘d4!

This can't be bad for Black, can it?



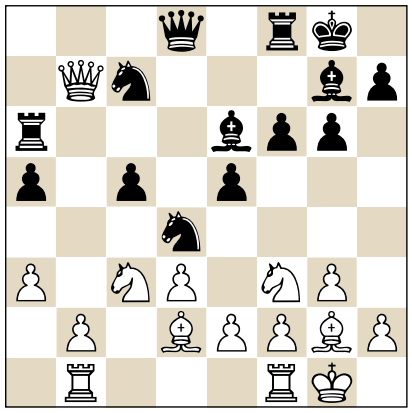
16.♘f3 Blundering a pawn, but actually the white position is already clearly worse. I think the problems started with 13.cxd5, when 13.♘a4 was White's last chance to maintain equality. This is not too illogical, considering that White wasn't generally fighting for the centre. You can see many games going wrong for White in such systems. Some Topalov-Caruana 0-1 comes to mind.

16.♗e3 is more practical and was suggested after the game by Peter. It's actually surprising how bad things are for White here after the simple 16...♕d7!.

16.f4 is an option, too, but Black has an overwhelming position after for example 16...f5!?.

16...♖a6 I couldn't see anything clear for a while and was surprised that there was nothing better than 16...♘cb5, which was my back-up move, with an equal endgame. Then suddenly a very nice cheapo occurred to me, and I went for the text-move.

17.♕xb7



17...♘xe2+! Very sweet. Not only do I win the pawn back with check, but in addition White's position is collapsing.

18.♔h1

18.♘xe2 ♗d5 traps the queen.

18...♘xc3 19.bxc3 ♗d5

I couldn't focus on alternatives, as this and the next move are too natural, but apparently 19...c4!? was quite good too.

20.♕b2 ♕a8 21.♘e1 ♖d6

I could have prevented my opponent's reply with 21...♘e6!?, but I don't think I should prevent such a desperate sacrifice.

22.d4

Giving up a pawn. The position was too ugly for Peter to handle.

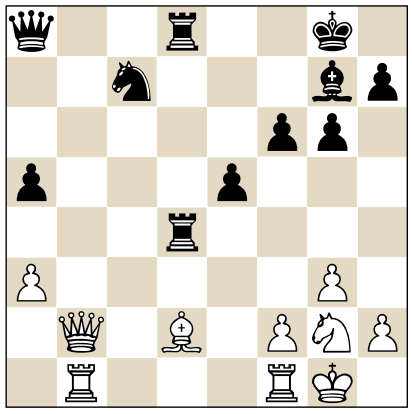
After 22.♗e3, 22...♘e6 23.♔g1 f5 is fantastic.

22...♖fd8 Useful. **23.♔g1** The best.

23...cxd4 24.cxd4 ♗xg2

24...♘e6 appeared very strong at first, but then it turned out to be not so easy: 25.dxe5 ♗xg2 26.exd6 ♗xf1 27.♔xf1 ♕h1+ 28.♔e2, and I couldn't find a mate here, and indeed there is none.

25.♘xg2 ♖xd4



I have ended up with an extra pawn and I wasn't sure how healthy it was, but it's clearly healthy enough.

26.♗c3 ♖4d7

26...♖d3!? was tempting, too, but in the upcoming time-trouble I decided to give Peter hell in the dry position without knights.

27.♘e3 ♘d5 28.♘xd5 ♖xd5 29.a4 h5!

Now it becomes clear that my main target is White's potentially weak king. The fact that the queenside pawns are still there is obviously to Black's advantage as well.

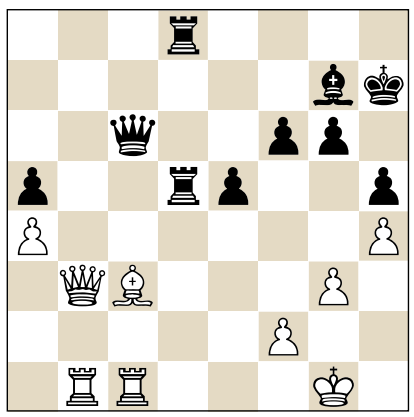
30.h4

30.♕b7 is in general a good idea, but White is uncoordinated after 30...♕xb7 31.♖xb7 ♖c8!.

30...♕c6 31.♕b3 ♔h7!

A nice move to make. Here I felt that practically speaking I was close to winning and that was a correct feeling.

32.♖fc1



32...♕d7?! Just keeping the tension and control of the d-file, but there was a forcing solution already.

32...♖d3! was the way, to just get it over with: 33.♕b5 ♕f3! 34.♗xa5 ♖8d4!, when Black will just mate, with ...g5 and ...f5-f4 being deadly threats. I was probably hesitating to give up the a5-pawn and unfortunately hadn't considered this option seriously: 35.♖e1! f5! 36.♕b7 ♕g4! 37.♖bc1 ♖xg3+! 38.fxg3 ♕xg3+ 39.♕g2 ♕xh4 is a possible winning line.

32...♖c5 33.♗b2 ♖d2 was my original plan, but here I noticed 34.♗a3!, when it is not so easy.

33.♗e1! e4!?

I felt the conversion was objectively not so easy and decided to put some pressure in the time-trouble phase.

34.♕b7 ♕xa4 35.♖a1

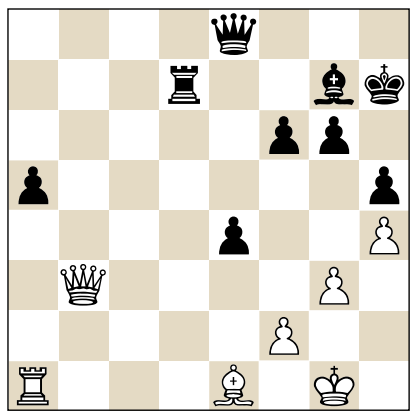
My original intention here was 35...♕d4, but I realized that I have to avoid the queen trade and thus should try and hide my queen.

35...♕e8!? 36.♖c7 Peter started playing well, move 40 was coming closer, the position was getting simplified. My win was slipping away.

36...♖5d7 37.♖xd7?!

37.♖xa5 is stronger, with good chances to save the position, with the pawns being on just one side: 37...♖xc7 38.♕xc7 ♖d1 39.♔f1 is OK.

37...♖xd7 38.♕b3



The a5-pawn is doomed anyway, but I get a couple of tempi now to get something going on the kingside. My original plan was to push ...e3 somewhere, but fortunately I realized just in time that it was not the key.

38...♖d3 39.♕c4 ♕d7!?

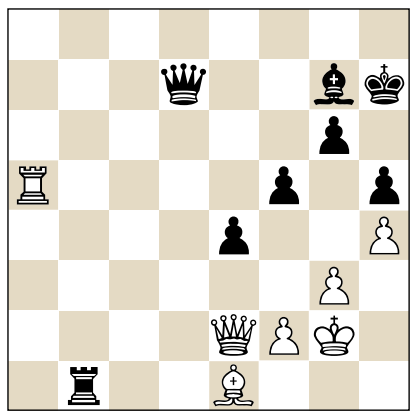
Trying to be clever, but on his last move before the time-control Peter doesn't fear any ghosts.

40.♖xa5!

Here I was hoping 40...♖d1 would win material, or at least that Peter would be afraid of that, but it didn't take long to realize that it's not happening. 40...e3 was my next thought, but that also only simplifies White's defensive task. At some point I realized that I still keep excellent chances with 40...f5!. White is uncoordinated, after all.

40...f5! 41.♔g2 ♖d1! 42.♕e2 ♖b1

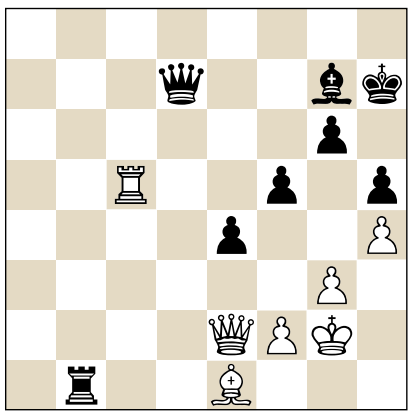
I tried to make some ...e3 tactics work, but couldn't. This move, instead, is very nasty. It is hard for White to come up with a good reply.



43.♖c5?

I actually saw the best move for White, but was afraid Peter would find an even better one.

43.♖a3! is strangely enough the only move to keep the game going, and strangely enough I was expecting it, too.

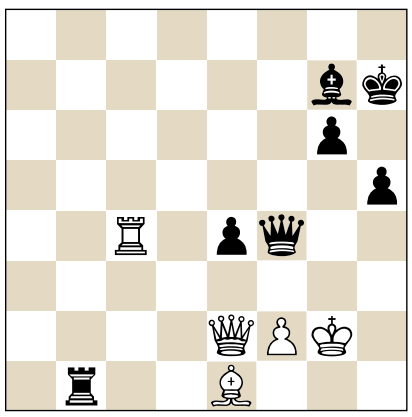


43...♕b7?

Unfortunately I missed a study-like win here: 43...e3!!. I obviously saw this motif and was in fact hoping that Peter would blunder into it. Here, though, the lines are just a couple of moves deeper than usual: 44.fxe3 ♕e7!, and suddenly it's all over: 45.♖b5 ♕e4+ 46.♔h2 ♖c1!. It's peculiar how, with so little material left on the board and White standing quite tight, he is so uncoordinated that he can actually resign.

44.♔h2 I had a nice choice here, either to keep moving around or to cash out into a 2 vs 1 endgame with a good pawn structure. Not seeing what I was really aiming for, I decided to just go with it.

44...f4!? 45.gxf4 ♕e7 46.♖c4 ♕xh4+ 47.♔g2 ♕xf4



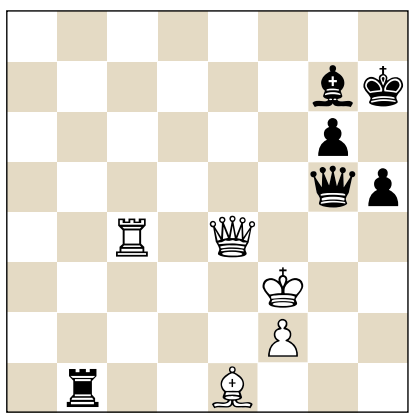
48.♕xe4?! We thought this move was the decisive mistake, but it was the panic on the next move that caused White's collapse.

48.♖xe4 ♕g5+ 49.♔h2 is lots and lots of suffering, but White keeps good drawing chances, I think.

48...♕g5+ 49.♔f3?

This obviously has to lose, the only question is how. Peter thought it was already too late, but actually it wasn't so simple just yet.

After 49.♔f1! Peter assumed 49...♕b5 to be winning, but White can resist: 50.♕d3! (50.♕e2? was the move I expected, when I win with 50...♕d5!), and there is no forced win, although White's situation is not too pleasant.



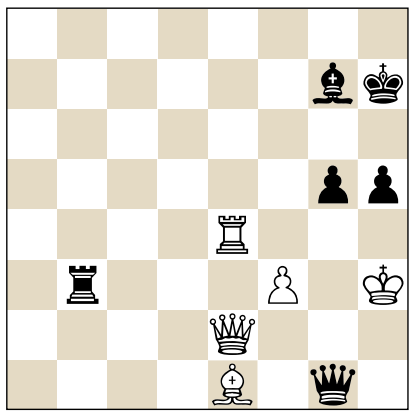
49...♖b5! I realized that my job now is to make sure the king doesn't get back to f1, nor that it flees to the queenside.

50.♕d3 ♕g1 This move and the next serve the same purpose: to keep the king exposed and keep alive the hope that Peter would blunder something or that a mate in two would suddenly appear.

51.♖e4 ♖b2 52.♕c4

Now it was time to actually calculate a forced win. It's clear that White can't survive here.

52...♕h1+ 53.♔g3 ♖b1 54.♕e2 ♕g1+ 55.♔h3 ♖b3+ 56.f3 g5



All of this was forced, it's game over now.

57.♗f2 g4+ 58.♔h4 ♕h2+ 59.♔g5

Since Peter didn't resign – and he usually resigns much too early – I was a little confused, trying to see a trap somewhere. There really isn't one...

59...♖xf3

And this was followed by resignation. An important win! Fortunately not the first one, but unfortunately the last one in this event.

For my direct encounter with Nepo I decided to stick to playing for two results only, but given his good preparation and solid defence, it quickly became clear that only one result would ensue and after 67 moves the game ended in a draw.

Things turned around the next day, and the tournament got a new leader when I lost to Aronian and Ian played a great game against Mamedyarov.

NOTES BY
Anish Giri

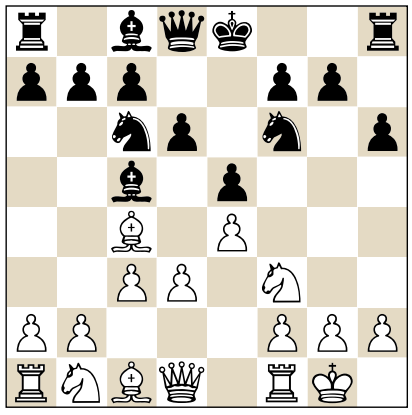
Ian Nepomniachtchi
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov
Moscow 2016 (6)
Italian Opening, Giuoco Piano

Ian Nepomniachtchi played high-quality chess throughout the event, never letting his guard down and always calculating to the best of his abilities. His win against Mamedyarov was of exceptional quality, a game even our grumpy World Champion would smile at.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4

Ian's main weapon has always been the Scotch, and it yielded him a quick victory in the very first round of this tournament. Having said that, at high-level tournaments, the concentration of Scotch games shouldn't be too high. The Italian Opening is a good choice; there is not much theory to know.

3...♗c5 4.0-0 ♘f6 5.d3 d6 6.c3 h6

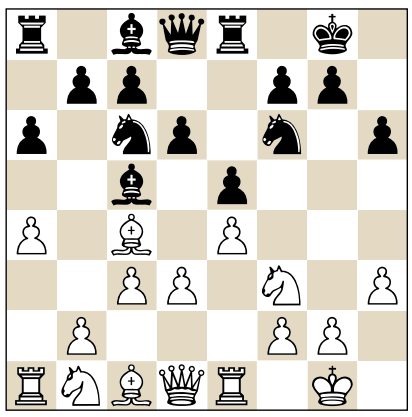


One of the reasons the Italian is back in fashion is that people have discovered that ♗g5 ideas can be quite unpleasant. Funny thing, as Magnus Carlsen (who for some reason is mentioned already for the second time in this game) liked this pin from his childhood onwards, but the rest of us understood its merits only years later. I won a nice game in the Italian against Eljanov in Norway Chess this year, when Pavel decided to allow the pin.

7.a4

There are too many move orders in the Italian, and while some people have their reasons for choosing a particular move order, others just randomly make the opening moves, which are a4/♗b3,♘bd2/♘a3, ♖e1 and h3.

7...a6 8.h3 0-0 9.♖e1 ♖e8



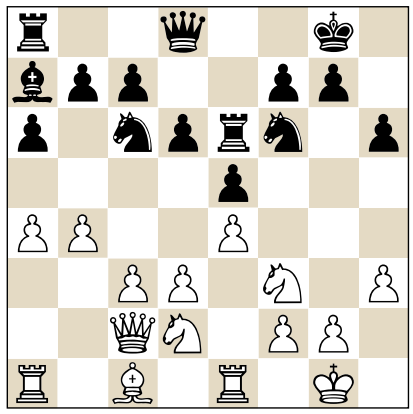
This is really one of the most natural set-ups. Black prepares ...♗e6 without wanting to recapture with the f-pawn and causing damage to the pawn structure. It is a common mistake at the lower levels to allow d4-d5 after ...♗e6, ♗xe6 and ...♖xe6, so some people also drop the bishop back to a7 to be sure. But if White's knight is on d2, then d4 doesn't have enough support, so there is maybe no need to drop the bishop back just yet.

10.♘bd2 ♗e6 11.♗xe6 ♖xe6

What I meant in the comments to 9...♖e8 is that if the knight was already on f1, then White would be able to win a piece with d4-d5 here. This is also why, later in the tournament, I tried saving on the move a4 against Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, but instead of blundering a piece, Shakh exploited the fact that I hadn't given my c4-bishop any space, and captured it with ...♘a5!.

12.b4 ♗a7 13.♕c2

Cleverer than 13.♘f1. The knight apparently has a different future in some variations.



13...d5?!

Falling into a positional trap, as Ian called it. I myself had this position once in a rapid game and went 14.♘f1 next, but the move Ian played in the game is indeed more principled and stronger, although to say that Black is already busted would be too much. Instead of the text-move, 13...♘e7!? first looks like an easy improvement to suggest and I suspect that something like this would have been Shakh's choice, if I had followed Ian's move order against him later on in the tournament. Now 14.♘b3 looks strange with ♘c5 not being an option, and if White proceeds with 14.♘f1, Black can hit with ...d5 at once or after some preparatory moves. So White hasn't achieved much, but the position remains playable.

14.♘b3!

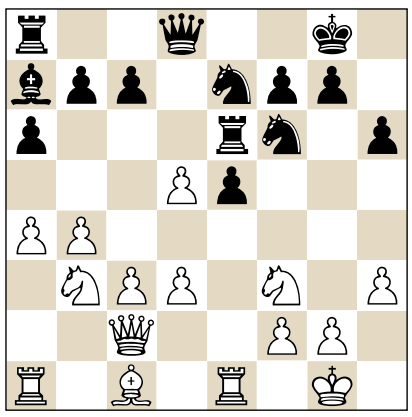
Ian seems to have learnt a lot from his teammates at the Olympiad in Baku. This was seen in the game Karjakin-Navara from the Russia-Czech Republic match. On a few other occasions I also noticed that Ian used the knowledge of his teammates. It is a talent to be able to learn opening theory through osmosis.

14...♘e7

14...dxe4 is always a concession, but knowing what happened in the game, it might have actually made sense to get rid of the tension in the centre. White still keeps some pressure, though, after 15.dxe4 ♘e7, and now for example 16.♗e3 ♗xe3 17.♖xe3 b6 18.a5, the situation on the queenside doesn't look too pleasant for Black.

Navara played an absolutely appalling move here: 14...b5?!, when after 15.♗e3 the c5-square became an even clearer target. It was an off-day for an otherwise great player and a very likeable guy with a great sense of humour and good manners.

15.exd5!?



15...♕xd5?!

In fact, there was a peculiar alternative, although obviously this natural recapture is the easiest move to make. It's hard to be too harsh here, but from this moment onwards Shakh is on the ropes, which is really hard to anticipate here. Credit to Ian, who played majestically from here onwards and

> **'It is a talent to be able to learn opening theory through osmosis.'**

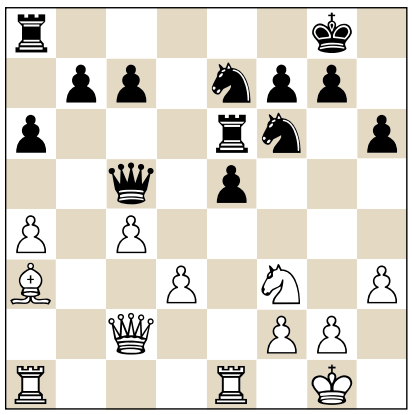
makes me question this very natural decision.

15...♘exd5 doesn't lose a pawn, but White keeps some slight advantage after 16.♖xe5 (16.♘xe5 ♕e7 17.d4 ♘d7!) 16...♖c6! 17.♘c5! ♗xc5 18.bxc5 ♖xc5 19.♗b2 ♘b4 20.♕e2 ♖xe5 21.♘xe5, and no matter where the knight retreats to, it's an edge for White.

15...♘fxd5!? would have been fun; pity Shakh didn't play it, because he is certainly capable of mixing things up this way: 16.♖xe5 ♖f6!? Preparing a pretty exchange sac; quite rare for it to happen on the kingside, rather than the standard ...♖xc3 in the Sicilian against a king castled queenside: 17.d4 ♘g6 18.♖e4 ♖xf3!? 19.gxf3, and now I would have loved to be Black if not for the a7-bishop. The bishop has a future after ...c6 and ...♗b8, but it takes some time for that to happen. Still, the position is very messy after, for example, 19...♘f6, followed by ...♕d7.

16.c4 ♕d6 17.♘c5! At some point you need to take a bold decision like this, otherwise the slight opening plus you have earned will evaporate.

17...♗xc5 18.bxc5 ♕xc5 19.♗a3



19...♕a5 Hard to criticize this natural move, but in fact it seems to be worse than the alternative.

19...♕a7 actually saves Black some time, because, as we will see later, the queen will end up here anyway. The fact that it doesn't protect the e5-pawn is irrelevant, as the pawn was doomed: 20.d4!. Still the best. 20...♘g6 21.♗b2! This leads to a similar position as in the game. White is still much better. I did say that Black has a better version, and he sort of does, since the rook is not on b1 and the bishop is not on c3, but I can't really see how Black benefits from those little details anyway.

20.d4! The point.

20...♘g6 21.♗b2!

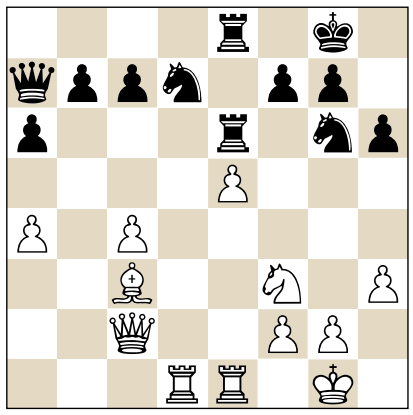
A good one. It doesn't seem apparent yet, but Black is kinda busted.

21...♖ae8 21...e4 22.d5 ♖ee8 23.♘d2 is much better for White as well.

22.♗c3 ♕b6 23.♖ab1

23.a5! is similar and perhaps even slightly more precise, given that the move is useful and the rook will end up on d1 anyway.

23...♕a7 24.dxe5 ♘d7 25.♖bd1



25...♘df8?!

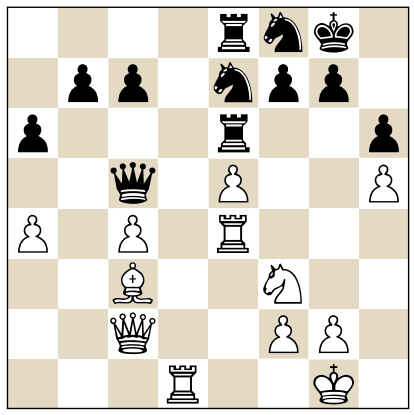
A mistake in a very unpleasant position. Shakhriyar didn't see the next move coming, I am afraid. In fact the pawn structure strongly reminds me of a game Shakh lost to Magnus once, long ago in Shamkir from a Cambridge Springs Variation in which White also went h4!-h5!, chasing the g6-knight away. This is really the last time I mention the Norwegian here; let's give the poor guy a break.

25...♘gf8!? would keep the position defensible. White is yet to come up with the winning regrouping, although I am sure that on this day Ian would have found it.

26.h4! ♕c5 27.h5 ♘e7

Black's knights look clumsy and his position will collapse soon. Counterplay (which should probably be on the queenside?!) is non-existent.

28.♖e4



MARIA EMELIANOVA

In Round 6, Ian Nepomniachtchi got Shakhriyar Mamedyarov on the ropes and then majestically converted his advantage to take the sole lead.

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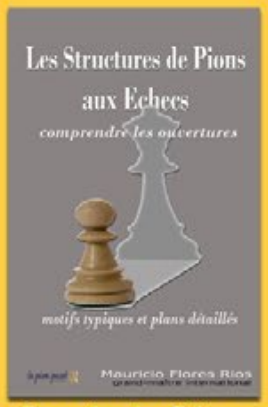

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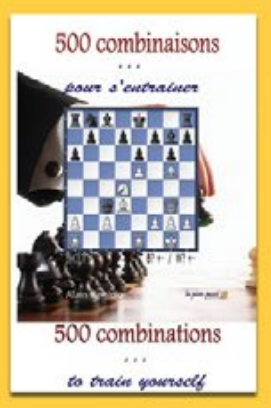

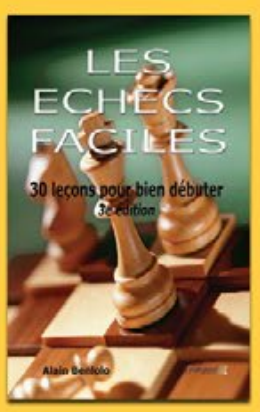

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28...♖c6

The position got so ugly that Shakh decided to give up an exchange. 28...♘c6 29.♖g4, followed by ♖d5, looks devastating in the long run. 28...b5 29.♘d4 b4 30.♗b2 ♘c6 31.♘xe6 ♘xe6 is not going to hold for long either.

29.♘d4?!

Winning the exchange, but the conversion is not as easy as it seems. 29.♖g4! ♘e6 30.♘d2 was even stronger, but humans have a tendency to cash out a big advantage at some point.

29...♕xc4 30.♘xc6 ♕xc6 31.♕d3!

32.♖c4 is one of the threats.

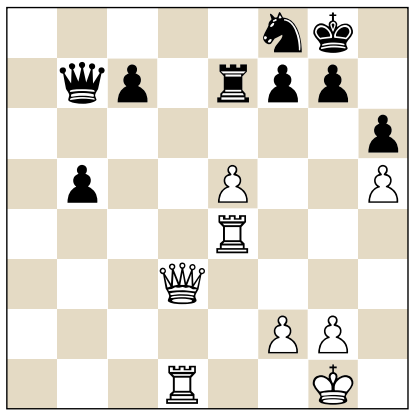
31...b5 32.axb5 axb5 33.♗b4 ♕b7

Now White's position is absolutely overwhelming. I once failed to convert an identical position against Fabiano Caruana, from the same opening variation, by the way. With that in mind, the fact that I didn't like Ian's winning method becomes irrelevant.

34.♗xe7!?

The following sequence would have been brilliant if it had been the only way to convert, but it's good enough and so it is impressive as well.

34...♖xe7



35.♖d4!

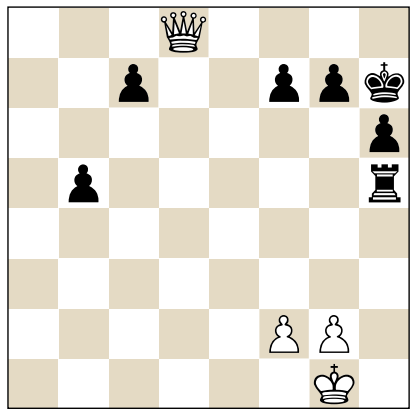
Winning by pinning, though for the greediest of us, giving up such a fat pawn on e5 is not easy.

35...♖xe5 36.♖d8 ♕c6 37.♕d7 ♕c5

This loses material at once, but there are some hopes of a fortress here, and the other moves probably lose as well. 37...♕c3 38.♕d2! should slowly win. Black will not only lose at least one of his queenside pawns, but he will also be unable to solve his pin issue satisfactorily: 38...♕xd2 (38...♕a3 39.♖e1!) 39.♖1xd2.

37...♕c2 is met by 38.♖a1!.

38.♕c8! ♖xh5 39.♖xf8+ ♕xf8 40.♖d8 ♕xd8 41.♕xd8+ ♔h7



42.♕d7!

Classy. I don't think that ...♖f5, ...g6 and ...h5 could be a fortress (though who knows), but apparently there is no need to even think about it.

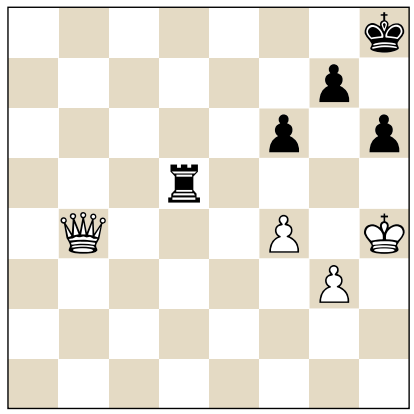
42...f6

The connected passed pawns would have meant a lot, but not when you are supporting them with just one rook against the mighty queen.

43.♕xc7

Now Black can have no stable outpost for his rook, which essentially dispels any doubts you may have on whether this could be a fortress.

43...b4 44.♕c2+ ♔h8 45.♕c4 ♖e5 46.g3 ♔h7 47.♔g2 b3 48.♕xb3 ♔h8 49.♔h3 ♖h5+ 50.♔g4 ♖g5+ 51.♔h4 ♖e5 52.f4 ♖a5 53.♕c3 ♖d5 54.♕b4



MARIA EMELIANOVA

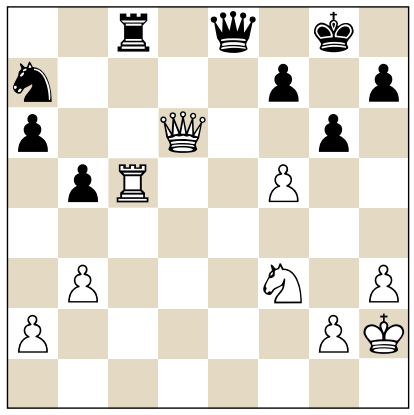
Anish Giri has let the win slip against Li Chao and he knows it. But it didn't take the Dutchman long to shake off his disappointment, as he was heading home, excited to find more people there than when he left.

This is a kind of zugzwang. Black resigned. All because the d5-rook has no support. Imagine White's f4-pawn being on h2; then Black could play ...♖e5, and that would be an entirely different story.

Given that I lost in this round, this was a turnaround in the tournament, and fortunately for Ian, one more turnaround was not meant to happen.

My game against Aronian went very wrong and I certainly learnt and will continue to learn a lot about myself and my opponent from this short but painful encounter. Given that Levon beat me and didn't lose any of his other games, I would consider him the moral winner of the tournament, and I am pretty sure he felt the same way. On the final day, Levon also knocked me out, hands down, in the dressing competition, so I am definitely going to be holding a grudge against my Armenian vis-à-vis. He had a good excuse for his fashion statement, though: his 34th birthday. However, this was only the second most notable birthday during this Tal memorial, as the next day my son Daniel was born; so a little comeback for me there.

The next two rounds, 7 and 8, were pretty uneventful, apart from the fact that Big Vlad was vainly trying to catch up with the leaders using all of his mighty willpower. Before the final round things seemed clear to me: Nepo, who was half a point ahead of me, would most likely suffer his way to a draw with Black against Gelfand, who had managed to get back on his feet again after a horrible start – five losses in Rounds 2-6. And I was the only one able to catch up with him, although I wasn't sure what to expect from the ever solid Li Chao, whom I was also playing with the black pieces. After the opening phase both these key games seemed rather balanced to me, but when Li Chao suddenly started taking a lot of time before a move that one generally makes automatically, I got my hopes up. The natural and best move didn't follow, and I got a slight edge, while Boris Gelfand seemed to be getting a very fat ± against Nepo. Things continued to go my way, and suddenly a scenario in which I would take unshared first place was no longer unrealistic. But as so often in such important games, a double meltdown occurred.



Gelfand-Nepomniachtchi
Moscow 2016 (9)
position after 36...♘a7

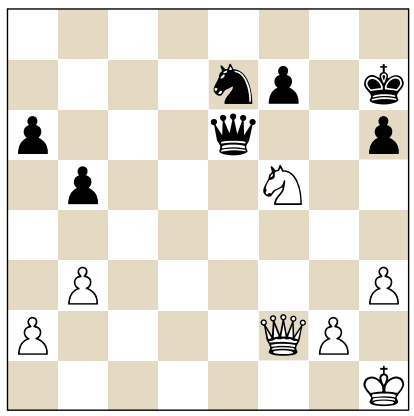
37.♘e5?

Nepo got outplayed, but as he was in excellent form he managed to stay in the game. Boris collapsed first, and here he blundered a pawn. Any other logical move would have kept Black on the ropes, particularly 37.♖e5!? or 37.fxg6!? hxg6 38.♖xc8 ♕xc8 39.♘e5.

37...♖xc5 38.♕xc5 gxf5!

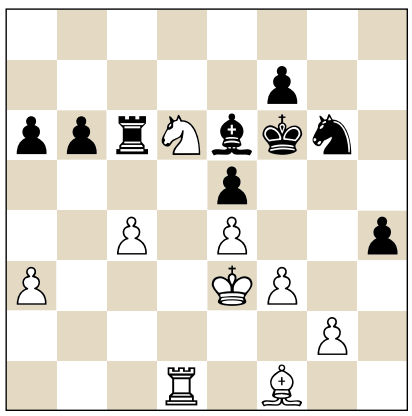
The knight on a7 is not really hanging and ♘d7 is not an option after the rook trade, so there is pretty much nothing left from Gelfand's advantage.

39.♘f3 ♘c6 40.♕xf5 ♕b8+ 41.♔h1 ♕d6 42.♕g4+ ♔f8 43.♘g5 h6 44.♘e4 ♕d5 45.♕f4 ♔g7 46.♘d6 ♕e6 47.♘f5+ ♔h7 48.♕f2 ♘e7



And here a draw was agreed. Boris could have played on a little longer if you ask me, but by now Black is really fine.

While Gelfand was pushing against Nepo, my game was going very well, and it looked as if I might leapfrog Ian in the standings.



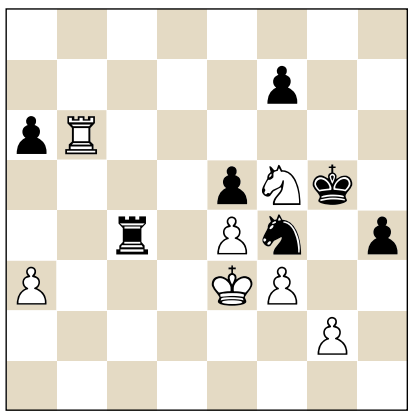
Li Chao-Giri
Moscow 2016 (9)
position after 32...♔f6

The game wasn't going well for my opponent. He got nothing out of the opening and after an inaccurate move he first was slightly worse and then his position deteriorated even further.

33.♘e8+ ♔e7 34.♘g7 ♗xc4 35.♘f5+ ♔f6 36.♗xc4 ♖xc4 37.♖d6+ ♔g5 38.♖xb6

This position looks winning for Black, but ♘d6 is coming, so it's not that trivial.

38...♘f4



This move is good, but 38...♖c2!? was another win: 39.♘d6 ♖xg2 40.♘xf7+ ♔h5 41.♖b7 ♖a2!.

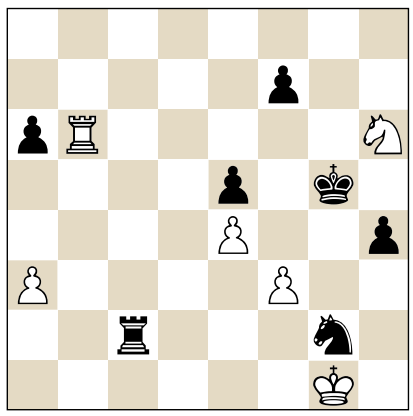
39.♘h6

Now it looks totally lost for White, and it is; but I had options and I suddenly started to have doubts.

39.♔d2!? is what I had expected, but after 39...♘xg2 40.♖xa6 h3 41.♖h6 ♘f4, I correctly judged that this was most probably lost.

39...♘xg2+ Also good was 39...♖c7!, threatening ...f6 and ...♖c2: 40.♔f2 f6 41.♘f5 ♖c2+ 42.♔f1 ♘xg2 . This looks winning, but for some reason I wasn't sure which 39th move looked more winning.

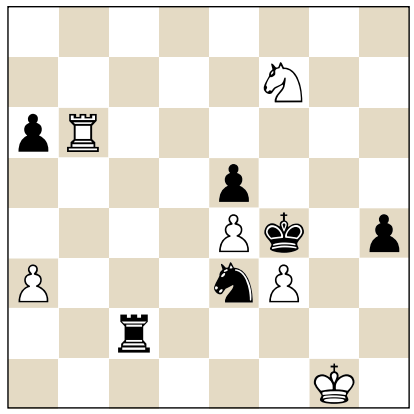
40.♔f2 ♖c2+ 41.♔g1



41...♘e3??

First of all, I didn't see a(nother) win, and secondly, I just forgot that there is no threat and that my opponent can just pick up the a6-pawn. After 41...♘e1! 42.♘xf7+ ♔f4 43.♖f6+ ♔g3 44.♘xe5 there is no mate on the first rank, which is why I went for 41...♘e3, not realizing that the mate is there, just a little further on: 44...♖c1! 45.♖g6+ ♔f4, and the white king is caught in a mating net. In view of what happened in the game, 41...a5!? was also a better option. After this Black also wins, albeit less simply, after 42.♘xf7+ ♔f4 43.♖f6+ ♔g3 44.♖g6+ ♔xf3 45.♘xe5+ ♔xe4.

42.♘xf7+ ♔f4



Here I assumed for some reason a check would follow, but that would only happen if the knight was on e1.

43.♖xa6!

Now it's just a draw. I could have tried to get rook and knight versus rook, but I didn't want to.

43...♘c4 44.a4 ♖a2 45.a5 ♔xf3 46.♖c6 ♘xa5

Draw. 46...♘d2 47.♘xe5+ ♔xe4 48.♖e6 is also a draw.

I am generally easy-going when it comes to accepting occasional failures, but a miss like this is never pleasant. In order to distract my mind I started writing this article. But soon I won't be fishing for distractions anymore, since I will be heading home, excited to find more people there than when I left.

As for the Tal Memorial, it's been a superb event, and I hope that the Russian Chess Federation will find the wood to keep this marvellous fire burning. ■

Moscow 2016 — **cat. XXI**

					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		TPR
1	Ian Nepomniachtchi	IGM	2740	RUS	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	1	1	½	6	2876
2	Anish Giri	IGM	2755	NED	½	*	0	½	1	½	½	½	1	1	5½	2838
3	Levon Aronian	IGM	2795	ARM	½	1	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	5	2789
4	Vishy Anand	IGM	2776	IND	½	½	½	*	½	½	0	1	½	1	5	2791
5	Peter Svidler	IGM	2745	RUS	½	0	½	½	*	1	½	½	½	½	4½	2762
6	Li Chao	IGM	2746	CHN	½	½	½	½	0	*	½	½	½	1	4½	2762
7	Vladimir Kramnik	IGM	2808	RUS	0	½	½	1	½	½	*	0	½	1	4½	2755
8	Shakhriyar Mamedyarov	IGM	2761	AZE	0	½	½	0	½	½	1	*	½	1	4½	2760
9	Evgeny Tomashevsky	IGM	2731	RUS	0	0	½	½	½	½	½	½	*	½	3½	2686
10	Boris Gelfand	IGM	2743	ISR	½	0	½	0	½	0	0	0	½	*	2	2555

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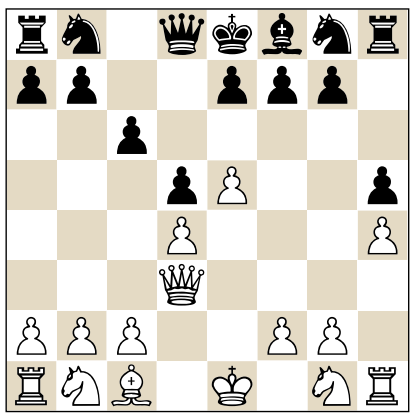
Something new under the sun

Matthew Sadler energetically started his holiday reading with a trio of opening books before it was time to unwind with a trio of entertaining games collections.

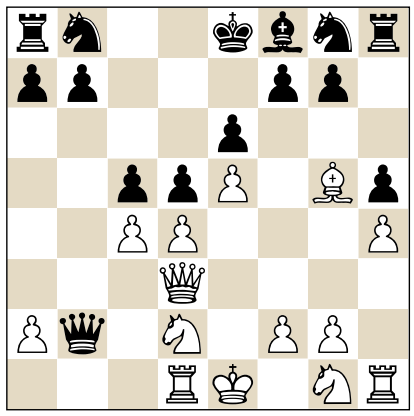
A short holiday to France gave me the perfect opportunity to catch up with my chess reading. Thank goodness I only had one Quality Chess book with me or I would have struggled to lift my suitcase! The massive tome I took with me this time was *Playing 1.e4. Caro-Kann, 1...e5 & Minor Lines* by John Shaw. In particular I ended up concentrating on the chapters on the Caro-Kann and the Petroff.

Part of me feels that I should simply praise this book. The author has clearly put in a lot of analytical work, and it seems churlish to make any complaints in the face of so much effort. Indeed, if I just add up the individual pieces of original analysis (both in these chapters and throughout the whole book) then I would say that you have outstanding value for money. My doubts arose when I viewed this in the context of a repertory book, designed to help an aspiring player build up a 1.e4 repertory with White. Let me try to explain where these doubts came from.

Against the Caro-Kann Advance Variation, Shaw recommends 4.h4 against the main line 3...♗f5, meeting 4...h5 with 5.♗d3 ♗xd3 6.♕xd3.



This line is still pretty much in its infancy. I count just 308 over the board (OTB) games in my database with a marked surge of interest from 2014 onwards, especially for players above 2600. The chapter on this line takes up 40 pages of which pages 108-109 and 119-148 are dedicated to a fantastic idea of Morozevich in a game against Laznicka from the 2015 Poikovsky Karpov tournament. Against the sharp try 6...e6 7.♗g5 ♕b6 8.♘d2 c5. Morozevich introduced 9.c4 ♕xb2 10.♖d1!.

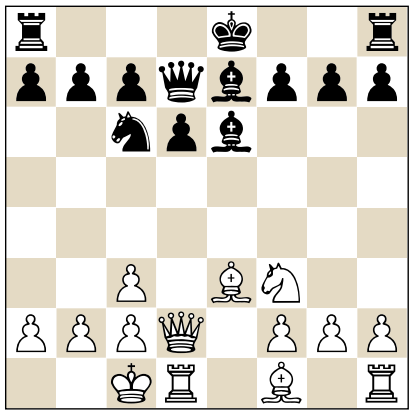


About three quarter of the chapter is dedicated to this specific variation. Is that bad? It reminded me of a problem that afflicted me as a young professional and which took me some considerable time to correct: I had large amounts of original and complicated analysis on lines that were very unlikely to arise. Against the most likely (and maybe least interesting) lines I had virtually nothing. This led to a strange and recurring situation in which I would spend many hours before the game revising my lines, get the opening I'd been looking at on the board... and then have to start thinking and fall way behind on the clock when my opponent played the most obvious line rather than the lunatic line I was hoping for!

This was the feeling I got from this book at certain times. From a practical point of view, I think that the chances of meeting the Laznicka line are quite small as Black has a considerable number of other sensible ways of playing this position. From a repertoire point of view, it would have made more sense to balance this extension of Morozevich's analysis in *Informator* with more thorough examination of other possibilities. My impression is that White needs to have a good grip of the positional niceties of the position in order to get something against Black's various plans – in general, achieving ...c5 before or after playing a knight to f5 with ...♕a5/b6-a6 as a disruptive manoeuvre against White's plan of c2-c4 – and I felt that the general guidance there was a little sketchy.

I had very similar feelings about the Petroff chapter. Shaw recommends the modern 5.♘c3, which is all the rage at the top level. Especially in the

solid lines 6...♗e7 7.♗e3 ♘c6 8.♕d2 ♗e6 9.0-0-0 ♕d7.

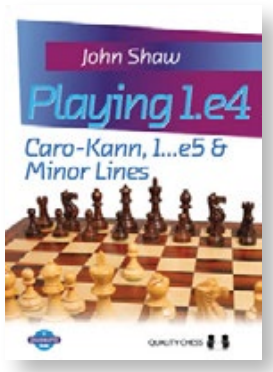


Essentially, the chapter often didn't get much further than a basic 'this is something you could play, and here are the stub variations'. Many lines end at move 14-17 with a conclusion of a slight advantage for White, whereas in fact that is pretty much the moment at which the game begins and thus the exact moment at which a little guidance might be useful (to me it all looked dead equal!).

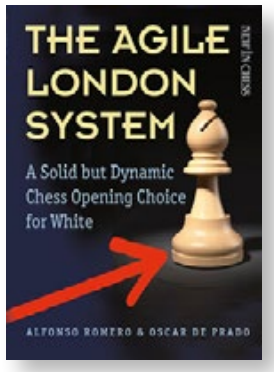
So a couple of gripes there, but they shouldn't detract too much from the excellence of the book in general. Viewed in the light of the French sun (37C and rising!) this was worth 4 stars!

One of the joys of chess is that however experienced you are, something new is always waiting around the corner for you. I never expected to see the word 'agile' used in the same sentence as 'The London System' and yet it has come to pass! *The Agile London System* by Alfonso Romero and Oscar De Prado is a timely examination of an opening that has surged in popularity after wins by Magnus Carlsen and Vladimir Kramnik against top opposition. It's a very popular choice in blitz at the very highest level, while Kamsky and Grachev have been living off the opening for many years. Kamsky has 167 rated games in ChessBase at a rating performance of 2712; Grachev has 129 rated games in ChessBase at a rating performance of 2650. I'd settle for both with my White openings!

Playing 1.e4 – Caro-Kann, 1...e5 & Minor Lines
by John Shaw
Quality Chess, 2016
★★★★☆



The Agile London System
by Alfonso Romero & Oscar de Prado
New In Chess, 2016
★★★☆☆



The book is a translation of the 2014 Spanish edition (mainly written by FM De Prado), updated until 2016 by GM Romero. It weighs in at a hefty 335 pages and is divided up into 10 chapters. Each chapter deals with a particular setup that Black might adopt against it, for example 'The London System versus the King's Indian', 'The London System versus the Queen's Indian' and the 'The London System against the Slav'. I could easily imagine only wanting to play the London System against a certain system or a certain type of player, so this presentation of the material makes a lot of sense.

'Move orders are the building block of opening play, and for me more or less the first topic I attempt to understand when learning a new opening.'

There is some good stuff in this book: I didn't see any obvious omissions in the ranges of lines covered and the authors have obviously tried very hard both to present a lot of material and to make suggestions for improvements in as many lines as possible. My main gripe – and it's something that I noticed more and more when re-reading the book – is about the coverage of move orders. Move orders are the building block of opening play, especially from a practical point of view, and for me more or less the first topic I attempt to understand when learning a new opening. The order in which you play your moves within an opening determines to a great extent whether the opponent reaches his setup against your opening in precisely the way that he wants. Unsettling an opponent through a move order is often worth just as much as a novelty. For example, depending on the qualities of a specific opponent, you might wish to use a move order that offers him certain types of positions but steers him away from others. This is particularly important in a 'lesser' opening like the London System in which Black's distance from equality is much smaller than in the main lines (at the start of the opening in any case).

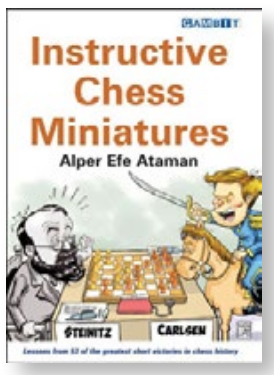
The first fundamental choice in the London System arises as early as move 2: do you first play 2.♘f3 and only then 3.♗f4, or should you play 2.♗f4 immediately (which GM Mark Hebden has christened the 'lazy Trompowsky'!)? The first is the traditional way of entering the London System, while the latter has been used by all the top players recently. From the summary of lines presented at the start of each chapter, you can infer that Romero and De Prado prefer the immediate 2.♗f4, but unless I'm blind, I haven't found any discussion of this cru-

cial moment apart from some brief comments in the last chapter on the Pereyra Attack. The Introduction describes the London System as 'characterised by the solid setup for White of d2-d4, ♘f3, ♗f4, e3, c3, h3' while the diagram at the start of Chapter 3 on the King's Indian displays a 2.♘f3 move order which only adds to the confusion.

Bizarrely, the Preface by IM Enrique Alvarez recommends a completely different move order against the King's Indian systems than the book itself!
After 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗f4 g6 3.e3 ♗g7 4.♘f3 d6, Alvarez recommends 5.h3 0-0 6.♗e2 ♘bd7 7.♗h2! (his exclamation mark). Romero and De Prado state that 'it is preferable to play without an early h2-h3' and recommend 5.♗e2 0-0 6.0-0 ♘bd7 7.h3. In this position Alvarez claims easy equality for Black with 7...♕e8 8.c4 e5 9.♗h2 ♘e4, while Romero and De Prado claim an advantage for White after 10.♘bd2 (a move not considered by Alvarez). These sorts of inconsistencies can make this a frustrating book to use when you're trying to learn the opening.

A few other quibbles are a matter of taste. I felt that a lot of illustrative games were analysed in needless detail after the opening and middle-

Instructive Chess Miniatures by Alper Efe Ataman
Gambit, 2016
★★★★☆

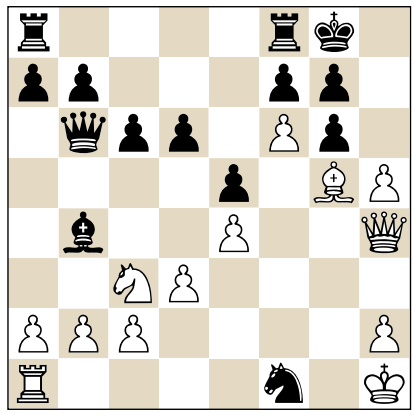


game phase had been completed. I also felt that many of the suggested improvements were simply of the type (9.♖g1+), which doesn't really impress when you've been exposed to the standard of Negi or Shaw. In summary then, a decent effort but not the definitive work: it just gets up to 3 stars.

Instructive Chess Miniatures by Alper Efe Ataman is a bright and breezy effort that I whizzed through too whilst on holiday. Nothing deep or fancy, just 53 well-annotated miniatures ranging from the Evergreen game Anderssen-Dufresne, Berlin 1852, to the very recent So-Kasparov St. Louis 2016 blitz game! In between there's a nice mixture of the familiar and unfamiliar. I had never seen these two finishes before, but they definitely raised a smile as I quaffed a glass of wine in the French sun!

Karel Opocensky
Josef Hrdina
Mlada Boleslav 1913

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♗b4 5.0-0 0-0 6.d3 d6 7.♗g5 ♘e7 8.♘h4 c6 9.♗c4 ♘g6 10.♘xg6 hxg6 11.f4 ♕b6+ 12.♔h1 ♘g4 13.♕e1 ♘e3 14.f5 ♘xc4 15.f6 ♗g4 16.♕h4 ♗h5 17.g4 ♘e3 18.gxh5 ♘xf1



19.h6 1-0.

Florian Handke
Piotr Murdzia
Hamburg 2002

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♖g1 ♘c6 7.g4 ♘xd4 8.♕xd4 e5 9.♕a4+ ♗d7 10.♕b3 b5 11.g5 ♗e6 12.gxf6 ♗xb3 13.axb3

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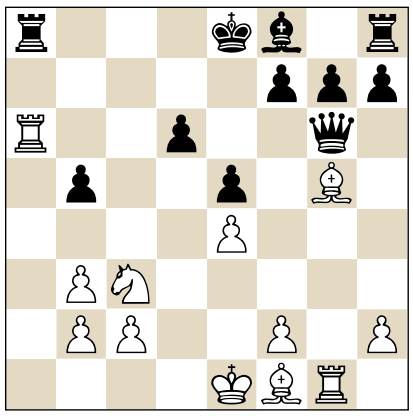
Best Attacking Games of 2012-2015
by Arkadij Naiditsch & Csaba Balogh
Chess Evolution, 2016
★★★★☆

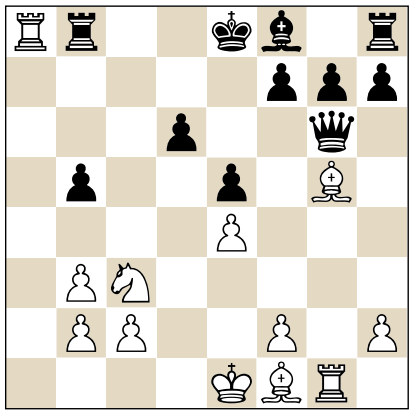
Most Interesting Draws of 2012-2015
by Arkadij Naiditsch & Csaba Balogh
Chess Evolution, 2016
★★★★☆

books *Best Attacking Games of 2012-2015* and *Most Interesting Draws of 2012-2015*. After all, with so many magazines and databases nowadays and so many games being published and distributed, who needs a book to tell you about modern games? And then I began to read through them, and I suddenly realised that so many of these wonderful games had passed me by! I guess the point is that with so much chess information flying around nowadays, you really need a good guide to help you find the good stuff! Naiditsch and Balogh do a great job of annotating the games, each game taking about four pages, and there's a good balance of text and variations. To be honest, I enjoyed the draws book even more than the wins book!

♕xf6 14.♗g5 ♕g6 15.♖xa6



15...♖b8 16.♖a8



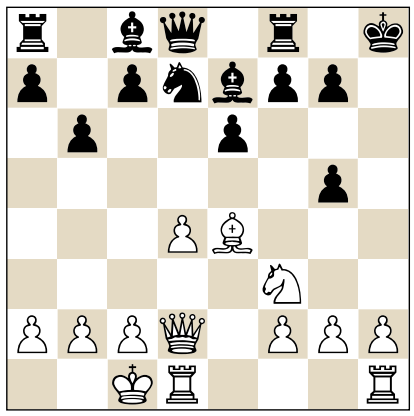
A great follow-up!
16...f6 17.♖xb8+ ♔d7 18.♗xb5+ ♔c7 19.♗e8 1-0.

I was also very interested to see the parallel that Ataman noticed between Judit Polgar's fantastic 14.g4 against Berkes:

Judit Polgar
Ferenc Berkes
Budapest 2003

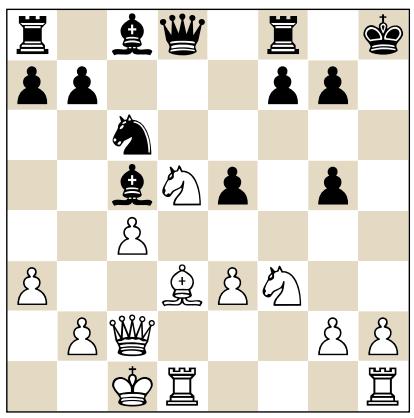
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♗e7 6.♗xf6 ♗xf6 7.♘f3 0-0 8.♕d2 ♘d7 9.0-0-0 ♗e7 10.♗d3 b6 11.♘eg5 h6

12.♗h7+ ♔h8 13.♗e4 hxg5



14.g4 ♖b8 15.h4 g6 16.hxg5+ ♔g7 17.♕f4 ♗b7 18.♖h7+ ♔xh7 19.♕h2+ ♔g8 20.♖h1 ♗xg5+ 21.♘xg5 ♕xg5+ 22.f4 ♕xf4+ 23.♕xf4 ♗xe4 24.♕xe4 1-0.

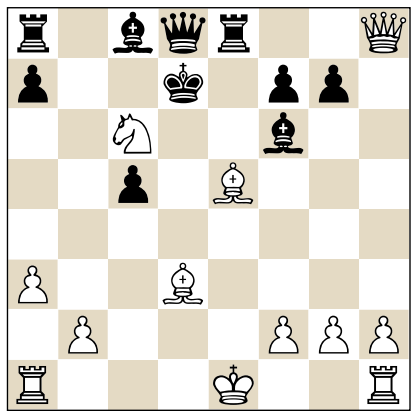
And Forintos' equally inspired 17.g4 in his game against Zedek:



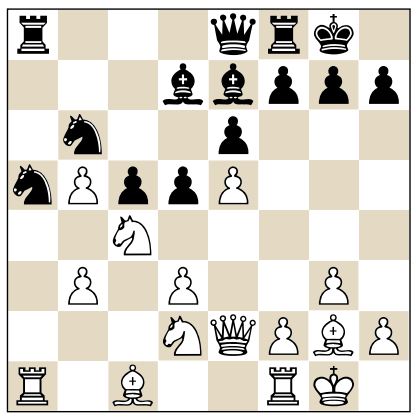
Forintos-Zedek
Imperia 1991

17.g4 ♗xg4 18.h4 f5 19.hxg5+ ♔g8 20.g6 ♗xe3+ 21.♘xe3 ♖f6 1-0.
All-in-all, a good fun read!

'What's the point of that?' was my first reaction when I got Arkadij Naiditsch's and Csaba Balogh's two



Svidler-Morozevich
Russian League 2012
position after 18.♗e5



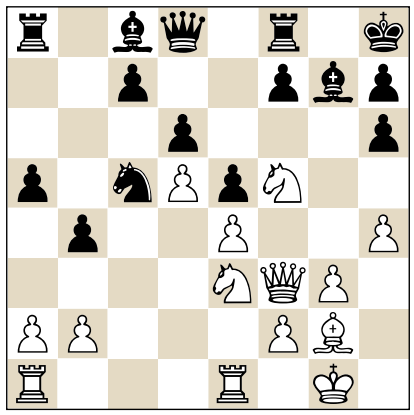
Svetushkin-Kryvoruchko
Spanish League 2014
position after 16.♘ac4

Chess doesn't get more exciting than this! Two excellent books which I thoroughly enjoyed reading! ■

ARTHUR VAN DE OUDEWEETERING

A bishop on the rim...

... can be quite a nuisance for your opponent! Sometimes offside *is* allowed.

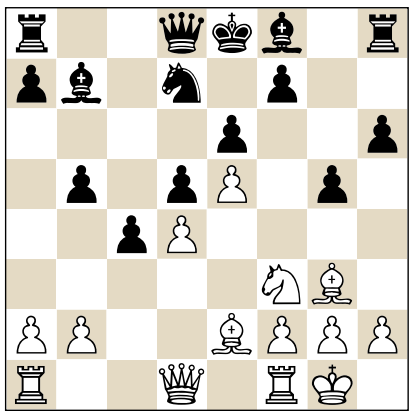


Carlsen-Vachier-Lagrave
Shamkir 2015
position after 20...♗g7

Where would you like to put the passive bishop from g2? Wouldn't c6 be the obvious square?

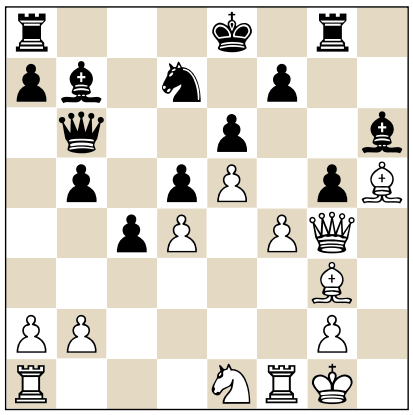
21.♗h3 Fair enough, 21.♗f1 can be met with 21...♗d7. **21...♖g8 22.♗g4!? ♕f6 23.♗h5** Naturally, Black's pawn structure is not enviable, but would you have thought of h5 as a strong square for the bishop? **23...♗xf5 24.♘xf5 c6?** This fails to a backward queen move – always keep an eye on those! **25.dxc6 ♖ac8 26.♕d1! ♖xc6** 26...♘xe4 27.♗g4, and White keeps his strong passed pawn on c6. **27.♕d5** And now we see what Carlsen had sensed long before: the vulnerability of the f7-pawn. **27...♖gc8 28.♖ad1 ♗f8 29.♕xf7 ♕xf7 30.♗xf7** And Magnus eventually converted the extra pawn – see New In Chess 2015/4 for Peter Heine Nielsen's notes.

With a king in the middle and as a sole defender of f7, the sortie to h5 becomes more obvious.



Salem-Fedoseev
Abu Dhabi 2016
position after 12...cxd5

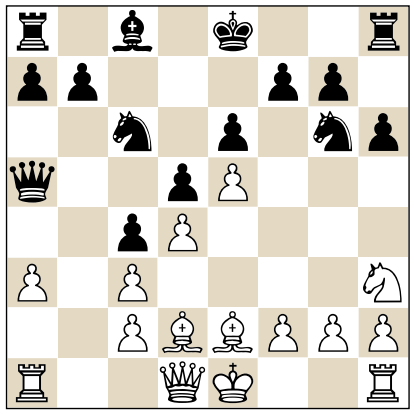
13.♘e1 ♕b6 14.♗h5 There it is. Next: open up the f-file. **14...♗g7 15.h4** After 15.f4 the black king escapes: 15...gxf4 16.♗xf4 0-0-0! 17.♗xf7?! ♖hf8 18.♗h5 ♘xe5. **15...♖g8 16.hxg5 hxg5 17.♕g4 ♗h6?! 18.f4!**



18...0-0-0 It appears that 18...♕xd4+ runs into 19.♗f2 ♕xf4 20.♕xe6+ ♔d8 21.♕xh6. **19.f5**, and Black quickly went wrong under pressure: **19...♖g7 20.♘c2 ♖h8? 21.♗xf7! ♖xf7 22.fxe6 ♖xf1+ 23.♖xf1 ♗c6 24.♖f7 ♘f8 25.e7+ ♔b8 26.♖f6 ♘d7 27.♖xh6 1-0**

The very same manoeuvre featured in Anand-Giri, also from Shamkir 2015, after 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.♘f3 e6 5.♗e2 ♘e7 6.♘bd2 h6 7.0-0 ♘d7 8.♘b3 g5 and now 9.♘e1 ♕c7 10.♗h5. This is not the only opening that sees White's light-squared bishop setting out for the edge of the board, aiming for the weakness on f7. For instance, in a Richter-Rauzer Sicilian with doubled black f-pawns, the sortie of White's bishop to h5 is also quite common.

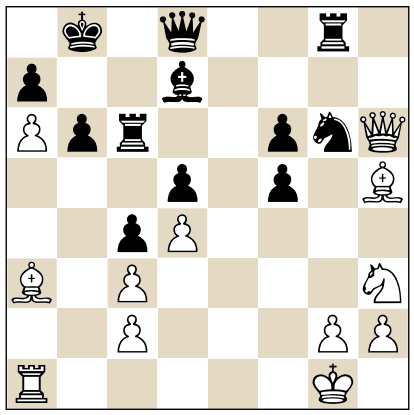
The Winawer French with 7.♘f3 or 7.a4 also tends to see the light-squared bishop end up on h5. It served Albin Planinc very well when he scored a hattrick against Jan Timman in the early 1970s.



Planinc-Timman
Amsterdam 1974
position after 11...♘g6

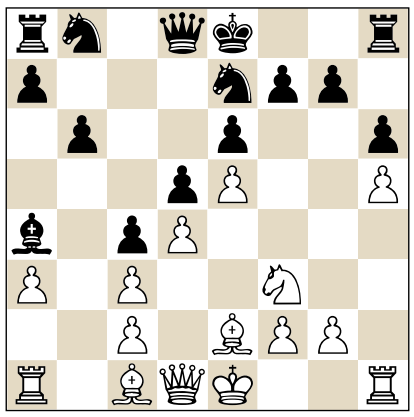
12.♗h5 Here the bishop is not so much threatening the f7-pawn as putting pressure on the kingside, hampering Black's mobility and activity. **12...♘ce7 13.a4 ♗d7 14.0-0 0-0-0 15.♕e1 ♔b8 16.♗c1** In the earlier games Planinc had ventured 16.f4 and 15.f4 respectively. The textmove seems the natural follow-up of 15.♕e1. **16...♖c8 17.♗a3 ♕d8 18.a5!** White is taking the lead on

both wings now. Black's knights seem tied up by the radiating white bishops. **18...♖g8 19.♕c1 ♖c6** Possibly intending ...♖a6 and, anyway, preventing a5-a6. **20.a6!?** Well, Black's last move had clearly not been discouraging enough. 20.♕b2 ♖a6 21.♖fb1 was a strong enough alternative. **20...b6 21.f4 f5** Now Planinc was tempted by the exchange sac. **22.exf6 gxf6 23.f5 ♘xf5 24.♖xf5 exf5 25.♕xh6**



And here Timman overlooked a tactic made possible by the little thing that just advanced on the other side. **25...f4? 26.♗xg6 ♗xh3 27.♕xh3 ♖xg6 28.♕h7 1-0**

Funnily enough, the same structure often sees Black's bad French bishop doing the same trick on the other side – eyeing a pawn on c2!



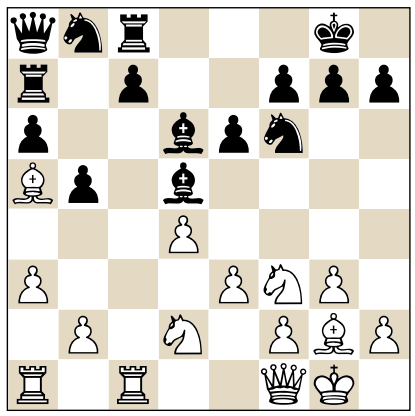
K.Georgiev-Jussupow
Las Palmas 1993
position after 12.♗e2

Here you French aficionados will have anticipated a typical creeping queen manoeuvre, preceded by a fancy king move: **12...♔d7!? 13.♘h4 ♕g8 14.♗g4 ♕h7** Georgiev could have been warned: Jussupow had successfully played the same manoeuvre against Andrei Sokolov in the first game of their 1985 Candidates' match. **15.♖a2** Now the bishop may be offside on a4, but the rook is doing no better on a2. After **15...♘a6 16.♖h3 ♘c7 17.♔f1 ♖af8 18.♔g1 g5 19.♘f3 ♘c6 20.♘h2 f5 21.exf6 ♖xf6** Jussupow won a complicated battle on the other side of the board. 0-1 (48).

'If you are not an experienced Catalan player like Kramnik, you might think "offside" when spotting the a5-bishop.'

In less favourable circumstances such an a4-bishop might indeed be offside, as in Stein's famous win over Petrosian (1961), when in a much more open position White could strike on the kingside.

If you are not an experienced Catalan player like Kramnik, you might think 'offside' when you spot the a5-bishop in the following position:

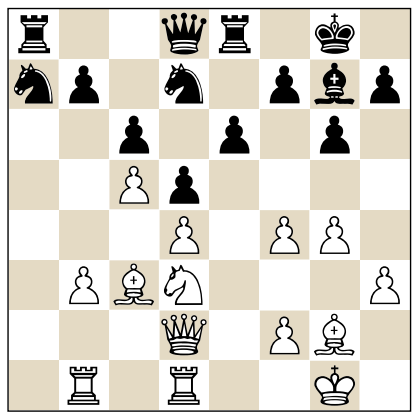


Kramnik-Anand
Wijk aan Zee 2007
position after 18.♕f1

18...♘bd7 18...♘c6 was the alternative, but why chase away a bishop on the rim, when you can prepare ...c5 in natural fashion? **19.b4!** Cutting off the retreat for the edgy bishop! The main aim of this move, of course, is to stop the liberating ...c5. As a result, Black gets stuck with some passive pieces as well. **19...e5!?** Otherwise White can slowly improve. **20.dxe5 ♗xe5 21.♘xe5 ♘xe5 22.f3!** An interesting battle arose, in which Black never managed to play ...c5 and the bishop remained on a5 almost till the end. (1-0, 53.)

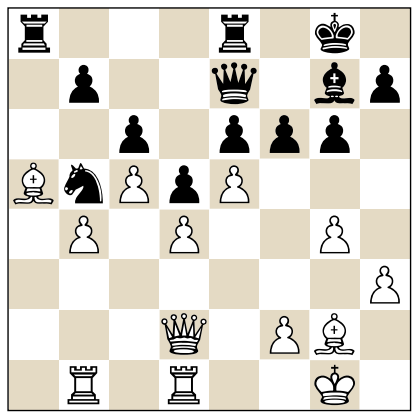
Although a bishop on a5 is a common enough occurrence in this line of the Catalan, there are cases in which it does end up completely off-side.

But now, which two moves would you blitz out here?



Zaid-Petrushin
Cheliabinsk 1975
position after 23...♘a7

24.♗a5 ♕e7 25.♘e5 It is certainly tempting to play 'actively'. However, after **25...♘b5 26.b4?! ♘xe5 27.fxe5 f6**



Black grabbed the initiative on the other wing. No restricted black pieces here, and no pressure from the a5-bishop. (0-1, 56.)

A pretty straightforward example of what may happen when your bishop ends up uselessly sidetracked. Now I may have spoilt an illusion, but hey, chess can be tough. ■

Jan Timman

Sweet success in the Arctic

In their rich careers Anatoly Karpov and Jan Timman have crossed swords in close to a hundred classical games. The centenary celebrations of the city of Murmansk brought our honorary editor his first match victory over a formidable opponent.

Since 2013, the Dutch transport and shipping company Basamro has been organizing an annual international youth tournament for cities. The event alternates between Rotterdam and Murmansk, both of them ports that play an important part in the company's logistics.

This year, the tournament had something special to celebrate: the centenary of the city of Murmansk. The city was established during World War I, partly because of its strategic position and partly because the Gulfstream would keep its harbour ice-free all year round. Various festivities had been planned in Murmansk, one of them a four-game match between Karpov and myself, dubbed the Basamro Supermatch. The idea for the match was conceived four years ago. Basamro representatives had visited Karpov and me during our rapid match in Groningen. This time, I suggested we play classical games: two hours for the entire game, with 30-second increments from move 41.

Many websites mentioned that Karpov and I would play our 100th game in Murmansk, but this is only true if you count our rapid games as well (and if you include the blitz games, our 100th game had been played well before Murmansk). As I said in *Timman's Titans*, the total number of classical games between Karpov and me stood at 91. There is no other player I have played against so often. For Karpov this is different – he crossed swords more than 100 times with two other rivals. His 143 games against Kasparov are a record that is unlikely ever to be equalled (for the sake of comparison: Anand and Kramnik have played each other 84 times so far). As I noted in New In Chess 2016/5, Karpov played a total of 104 games against Kortchnoi. A remarkable detail is that the majority of the games between the three Ks took place in World Championship matches, whereas Karpov played more tournament games against me than against Kasparov and Kortchnoi combined!

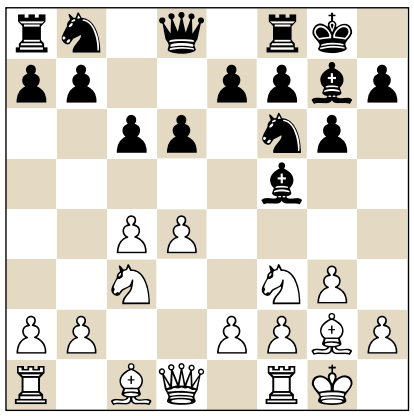
I knew in advance that I would be facing an uphill struggle in Murmansk. Karpov rarely plays these days, but when he does, he does it very well, as witness the annual rapid tournament in Cap d'Agde. He played his last classical games in the Bundesliga two years ago, convincingly beating the strong grandmasters Rodshstein and Mchedlishvili. No, I really didn't have a single reason to underestimate him.

We stayed and played in the Park Inn Hotel on the outskirts of the city centre of Murmansk. The restaurant had been fitted out as the playing hall; the big room for the youth tournament and a slightly smaller room for our match. As a consequence, the meals had to be served in the discotheque, but this wasn't a serious problem, because many young people have left Murmansk, and the demand for nightly musical entertainment has dropped sharply as a result.

After the first match game I heard that there had been people who thought that Karpov and I had arranged everything in advance; apparently, they couldn't imagine that old geezers like us would still be capable of a real fight. But they had to conclude pretty quickly that we were squaring up to each other daggers drawn. Our first game was interesting in every respect.

Anatoly Karpov
Jan Timman
Murmansk 2016 (1)
King's Indian, Fianchetto Variation

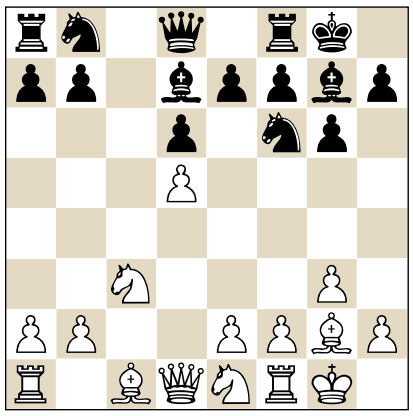
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.g3 0-0 5.♗g2 d6 6.0-0 c6 7.♘c3 ♗f5



The Larsen Variation, which I played

for the first time here. It is not easy for White to create an opening advantage in this line.

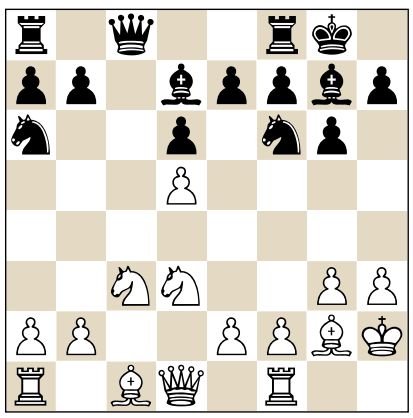
8.♘e1 ♗e6 9.d5 cxd5 10.cxd5 ♗d7



11.h3 A move of Peter Heine Nielsen's. White wants to take control of the crucial square g4. In the third game, Karpov deviated with 11.♕b3, but he had no advantage to speak of after 11...♘a6 12.♘d3 ♕b6.

11...♘a6 12.♘d3 ♕c8 This seems stronger than 12...♕a5, as in Heine Nielsen-Benjamin, Las Vegas 1999.

13.♔h2



13...♘c5 The point of the previous move. The knight swap relieves the pressure on the black position.

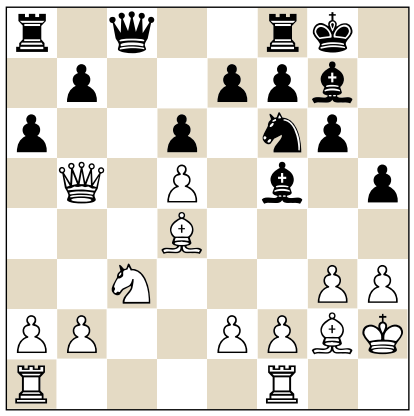
14.♗e3 ♘xd3 15.♕xd3 ♗f5 16.♕b5 Karpov played this without thinking. But withdrawing the white queen to d2 was a good alternative.

16...h5 Not just to prevent the advance of the white g-pawn. In certain circumstances, Black wants to continue pushing his h-pawn.

17.♗d4 The alternative was 17.♖ac1. After 17...♕d7 18.♕b3 ♖fc8 19.♗d4 g5! Black has sufficient counterplay.

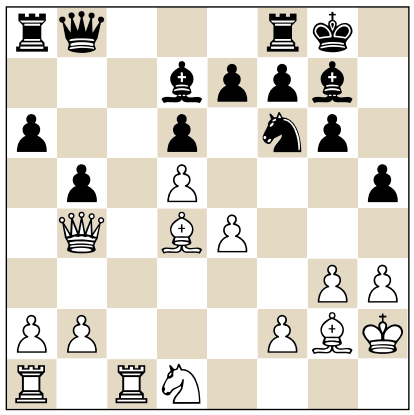
17...a6

'Apparently, they couldn't imagine that old geezers like us would still be capable of a real fight.'

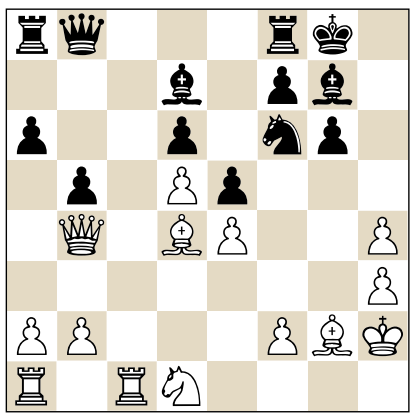


18.♕b4 Certainly not 18.♕b3? in view of 18...♘e4! 19.♗xg7(?) ♘d2!, and Black wins an exchange.

18...b5 19.♖fc1 ♕b8 20.e4 ♗d7 21.♘d1



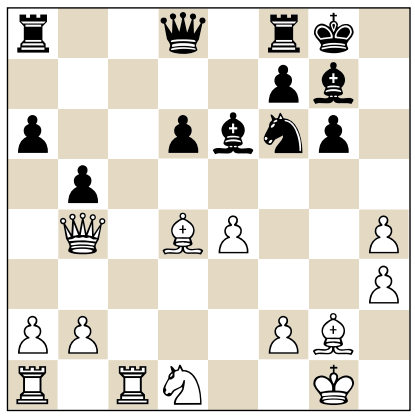
21...h4! The correct moment for the advance. Now the play is getting very sharp. **22.gxh4 e5!** Necessary; otherwise Black would be too cramped to create any kind of initiative.



23.dxe6 Keeping the position closed would have had its drawbacks. After 23.♗e3 ♘h5 24.♕a5 ♕e8! 25.♕b6 ♕e7 Black would have solid control of the position. His knight is poised to jump to f4.

23...♗xe6 24.♔g1 Karpov was unhappy with this move afterwards, but it is still the computer's first choice. The alternative 24.f4 would also have given Black sufficient counter-chances after 24...d5 25.e5 ♘h5.

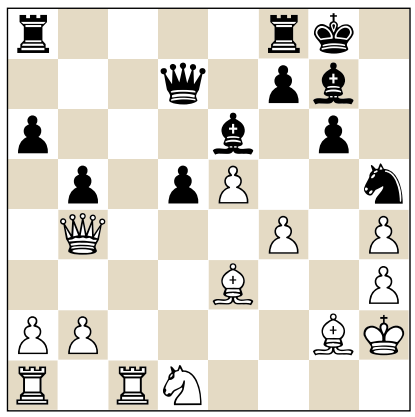
24...♕d8 The point of Black's play. He reactivates his queen and prepares the bishop sortie to h6.



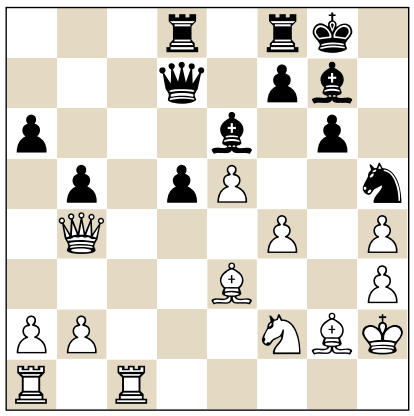
25.♗e3 Intending to keep the black bishop from h6. But this move is too slow, and now Black is better. Correct was 25.♘e3. After 25...♗h6 26.♕c3 ♖c8! 27.♗xf6 ♖xc3 28.♗xd8 ♖xc1 29.♖xc1 ♖xd8 the chances would be equal. The bishop pair compensates for the missing pawn.

25...♕d7 26.♔h2 d5 This breaking move, too, is accurately timed. White is forced to advance his e-pawn.

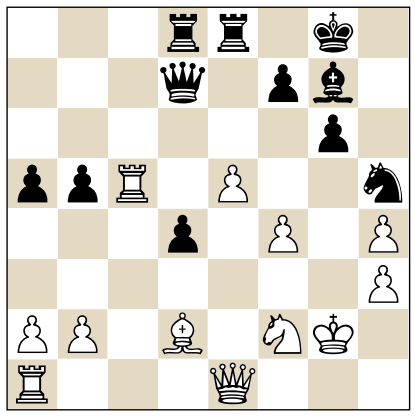
27.e5 ♘h5 28.f4 A critical moment. I realized that Black was clearly better, in addition to which Karpov was already feeling some time-pressure. But I failed to find the correct continuation.



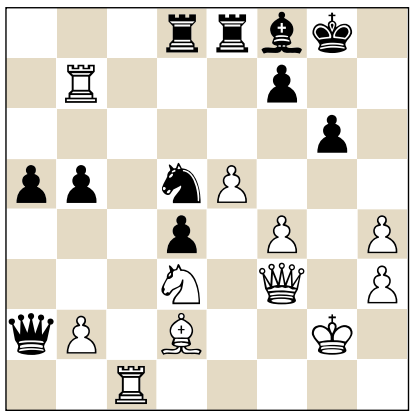
28...♖ad8 My plan was to continue pushing my d-pawn, but White can easily defend against this.
Crucial was 28...♕d8 29.♕e1 f6, but I wasn't sure of the complications after 30.♖c6. However, Black would be better after 30...♕e8!, although White would have positional compensation for the exchange after 31.exf6 ♕xc6 32.fxg7 ♔xg7 33.♖c1.
The clearest way to an advantage was 28...♖ac8, less to swap rooks than to take my rook to c4, after which I can force a rook swap under favourable conditions.
29.♘f2 Karpov played this at once, and I immediately realized that I had let my advantage slip. The white knight is surprisingly well-positioned on f2.



29...a5 An attempt to muddy the waters with a pawn sacrifice. After 29...d4 White does not play 30.♖d1, since Black would be better after 30...♕c7! 31.♖ac1 ♕b8 32.♖xd4 ♗xe5!. Better is 30.♗d2 ♗h6 31.♘e4!, with sufficient counterplay. It's this last move that I had overlooked in my calculations.
30.♕e1 Karpov used up a substantial portion of his remaining time for this retreat. White could have accepted the pawn, but after 30.♕xa5 d4 he would have been in some trouble, e.g. 31.♖c7 ♕xc7! 32.♕xc7 dxe3, with ample compensation. And both 31.♗d2 and 31.♖d1 would have run into 31...♕e7, which was the intention of the pawn sac: square e7 has become available to the black queen.
30...d4 31.♗d2 ♗d5 Strategically correct, but too slow. Black should have gone 31...d3 in order to prevent a strategic blockade. After 32.♖c3 ♗h6 the position is dynamically balanced.
32.♖c5 ♗xg2 33.♔xg2 ♖fe8 The best option. Black vacates square f8 for his bishop.



34.♖ac1 Being short of time, Karpov fails to find the strongest continuation. Crucial was 34.♕e4. But with so little time it was hard to see that White would be better after 34...♗f8 35.♖c6 ♗b4 36.♗xb4 ♘xf4+ 37.♔h2! axb4 38.♘g4. Not that Black needs to worry. After 38...♘d5 39.♖d1 he can offer a queen swap with 39...♕f5, after which he will hardly be in danger in the endgame.
34...♗f8 35.♖c7 ♕d5+ This is the difference. Black can go and collect a pawn on the queenside.
36.♕e4 ♕xa2 37.♘d3 Completing the strategic blockade.
37...♘f6 Black also transfers his knight to better pastures; it's on its way to e3.
38.♕f3 ♘d5 39.♖b7



39...♘e3+ 40.♔h2 White cannot

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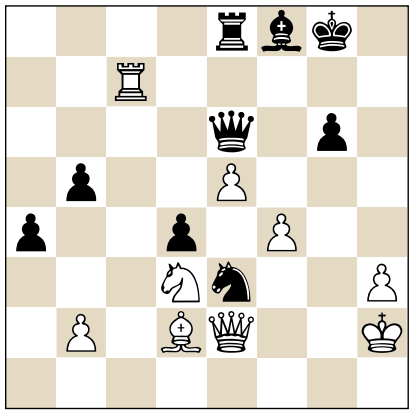
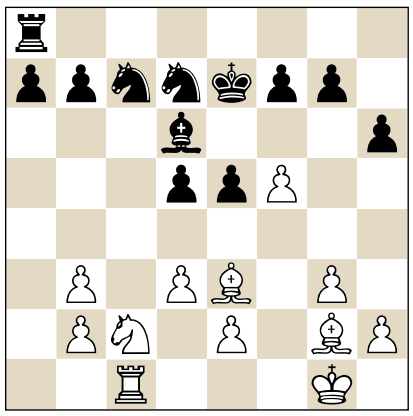
take the knight, since this would lead to a total collapse of his position.
40...♕b3 41.♕e2 Karpov had received half a minute of extra time; enough to see that he should withdraw his queen to defend. After 41.♕e4 ♖c8 Black would be winning.
41...♖c8 42.♖bc7 ♖xc7 43.♖xc7 a4 44.h5 Both players set their majority in motion. **44...♕e6** The computer regards 44...gxh5 as stronger, but I did not want to open the g-file. **45.hxg6 fxg6**



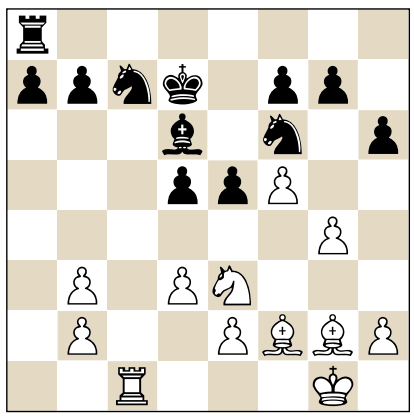
46.♕f3 After 46.♗xe3 dxe3 47.♕xe3 ♖e7! the balance would have been maintained.
46...♖c8 47.♖xc8 ♕xc8 48.♗xe3 dxe3 49.♕d5+ ♔h7 50.♕xb5 ♕c2+ Now the two queens dominate the board. **51.♔g3 e2 52.♘e1 ♕d2 53.♔f2 ♕xf4+** Draw.

The second game was a pitched strategic battle. I will restrict myself to a fragment.



Timman-Karpov
Murmansk 2016 (2)
position after 20...h6

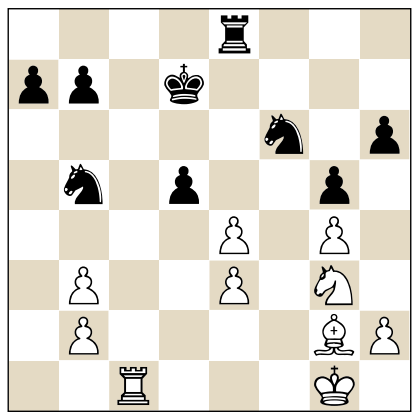
21.♗f2 Intending to vacate square e3 for the knight and increase the pressure on the black d-pawn. I was optimistic about my chances here, but the computer regards the position as equal.
21...♘f6 22.♘e3 ♔d7 23.g4



23...g5 This pawn move took me completely by surprise. Black allows the position to be opened, looking for more room for his pieces. The computer's first choice is the natural 23...♖e8, preparing the advance of the e-pawn.
24.fxg6 fxg6 25.♗h4 Purposeful play. White is forcing Black to relinquish square f5.
25...g5 26.♗g3 ♖e8 27.♘f5 ♘b5 28.e3 Here I lowered my guard. With 28.♖f1! White could have retained his advantage.

Anatoly Karpov and Jan Timman go over the third game that decided the match in the Dutchman's favour.

28...e4 Of course. Now White can no longer boast the slightest plus.
29.dxe4 ♗xg3 30.♘xg3



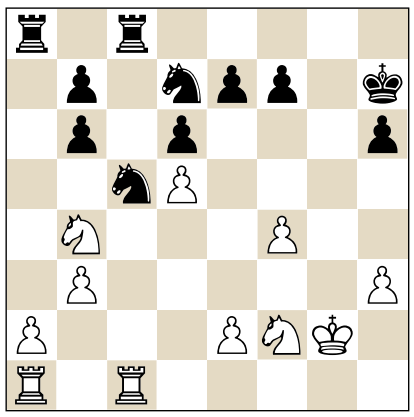
30...♘d6! And this is another fine move. White must be careful not to slip behind. Later in the game I squandered a pawn in an equal position, but it didn't affect the balance (½-½, 76).

The decision came in the third game.

Anatoly Karpov
Jan Timman
Murmansk 2016 (3)
King's Indian, Fianchetto Variation

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.g3 0-0 5.♗g2 d6 6.0-0 c6 7.♘c3 ♗f5

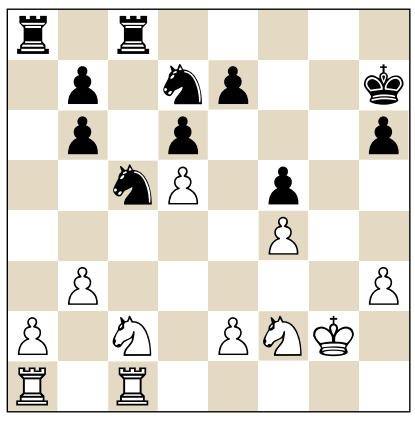
8.♘e1 ♗e6 9.d5 cxd5 10.cxd5 ♗d7 11.♕b3 ♘a6 12.♘d3 ♕b6 13.♕xb6 axb6 14.♗g5 ♘c5 15.♘b4 h6 16.♗d2 ♖fc8 17.♖fc1 ♗f5 18.f3 g5 19.♘d1 ♘fd7 20.♗c3 ♘e5 21.b3 ♗g6 22.f4 gxf4 23.gxf4 ♘g4 24.♗xg7 ♔xg7 25.h3 ♘f6 26.♘e3 ♔h7 27.♔h2 ♗e4 28.♘g4 ♘fd7 29.♘f2 ♗xg2 30.♔xg2



30...f5

Fixing the white d-pawn. But now the black f-pawn might also become weak. The shared weaknesses cancel each other out, and the position will be equal if White takes his knight to d1, on its way to e3.

31.♘c2?



Murmansk 2016

1	Jan Timman	2565	½	½	1	½	2½
2	Anatoly Karpov	2628	½	½	0	½	1½

But this is a very uncharacteristic blunder on Karpov's part.

31...♘xb3! A *petite combinaison* that will net Black at least a pawn.

32.axb3 ♖xa1 33.♖xa1 ♖xc2 34.♖a7 ♘f6 The finishing touch. Black captures the d-pawn as well, after which his b- and e-pawns are tidily covered.

35.♖xb7 ♘xd5 36.♔f1 ♖c1+ 37.♔g2 ♘xf4+ 38.♔h2 ♘d5 39.e4 fxe4 40.♘xe4 ♔g6 0-1

It must be said that Karpov's blunder was not caused by time-pressure. On the contrary; he played remarkably fast in this third game. I think he was just tired after two heavy battles. We did not have a rest day in Murmansk.

In the final game, I kept the door closed as White, and so I was able to go and celebrate my first match win over a formidable opponent. ■

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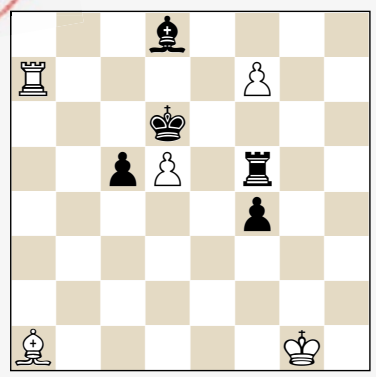
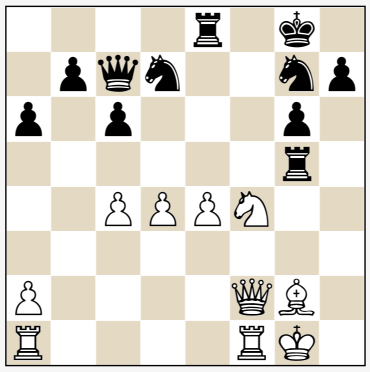


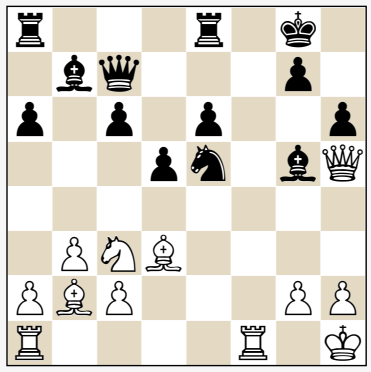
1. Adhiban-Minero
Baku 2016

White exploits the 'Novotny theme' to help his passer: **47.♗f6! ♖xf6 48.♖a6+** Black resigned.



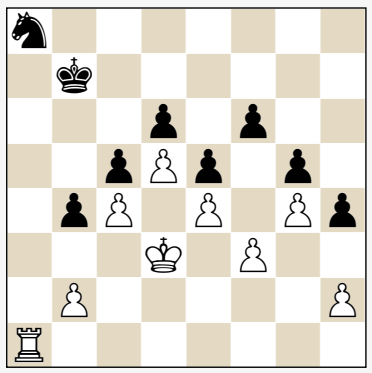
2. Cabarkapa-Abramovic
Paracin 2016

23.♘e6! Forcing the black rook to leave the back rank. **23...♖xe6 24.♕f7+ ♔h8 25.♕f8+!** And mate on the next move.



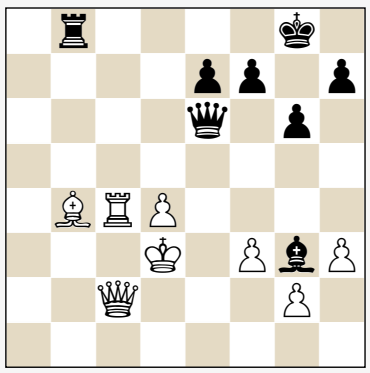
3. Jakubowski-Tunik
Pardubice 2016

19.♘b5! cxb5 20.♗xe5 ♕xe5 21.♕f7+ An important interposition. **21...♔h8 22.♕g6** And White won.



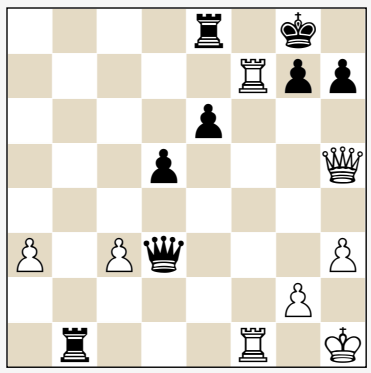
4. Edouard-Gharamian
Agen 2016

58.f4! exf4 Or 58...gxf4 59.g5 fxg5 60.♖g1, breaking through on the king-side. **59.e5! dxe5** If 59...fxe5, 60.b3!, followed by the king's march to f5. **60.♖a5** Black resigned.



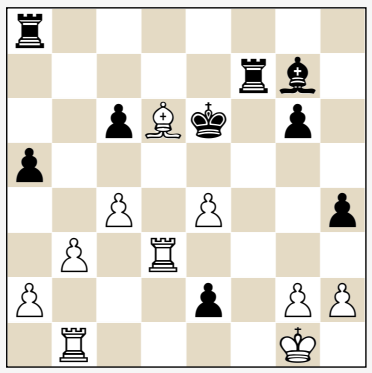
5. Cox-Liang
Greensboro 2016

To use diagonals to the maximum you first need to deliver a vertical blow. **49...♖xb4!** White resigned in view of 50.♖xb4 ♕f5+ 51.♔d2 ♗e1+!.



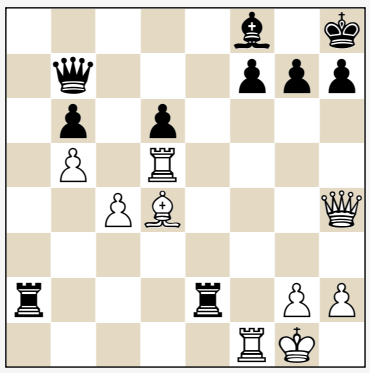
6. Wang Hao-Antipov
Abu Dhabi 2016

34.♖xg7+! ♔xg7 35.♕f7+ ♔h6 White's rook is pinned, but it does support the queen. **36.♕f4+! ♔h5 37.♕g4+ ♔h6 38.♕h4+!** Black resigned – 38...♔g7 39.♕f6+ ♔g8 40.♕f7+ ♔h8 41.♕xe8+ with mate in 3.



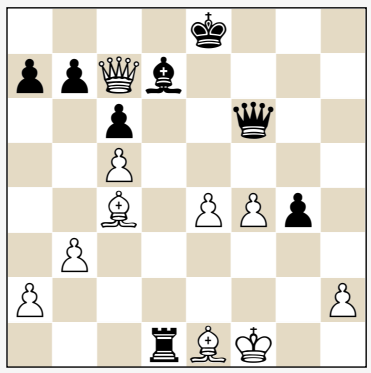
7. Ter Sahakyan – Aryan
Abu Dhabi 2016

34...♖af8! The only way to demonstrate the power of the e-pawn. **35.♗xf8 ♗xf8 36.g4** Or 36.♖f3 ♗c5+ 37.♔h1 ♖d7 and Black wins. **36...♗c5+ 37.♔g2 ♖f2+ 38.♔h3 ♖f1** White resigned.



8. Gluhovsky-Aroshidze
Castell de Sant Ferran 2016

31.♗xg7+! ♔g8 31...♗xg7 32.♕d8+ or 31...♔xg7 32.♕f6+ ♔g8 33.♖g5+. But now Black threatens to take on g2. **32.♗b2! ♖xg2+** On 32...♖axb2, 33.♕g5+ ♗g7 (33...♔h8 34.♕f6+) 34.♕d8+ ♗f8 35.♖g5+ mates. **33.♔xg2 ♖xb2+ 34.♔h1** Black resigned.



9. Pashikian-Anton
Martuni 2016

43...g3! 44.hxg3 After 44.♕b8+ ♔e7 45.f5 g2+ 46.♔xg2 ♖xe1 White is a rook down. **44...♗h3+ 45.♔e2** If 45.♔f2 ♕d4+ 46.♔f3 ♖xe1 and there is no perpetual. **45...♕b2+! 46.♔f3** 46.♔xd1 ♗g4+ 47.♗e2 ♗xe2 mate. **46...♕g2+** White resigned.

Just Checking

Li Chao

CURRENT ELO: 2758

DATE OF BIRTH: April 21, 1989

PLACE OF BIRTH: Tai Yuan, Shanxi, China

PLACE OF RESIDENCE: Cheng Du, China

What is your favourite colour?
Green.

What kind of food makes you happy?
Ice cream.

And what drink?
Chinese tea, jasmine tea.

Who is your favourite author?
Mark Dvoretsky.

What was the best book you have ever read?
Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*.

What book is on your bedside table?
A Chinese book, *The Three-Body Problem* by Cixin Liu.

What is your all-time favourite movie?
The Bourne Identity.

What is your favourite TV series?
24 Hours and *Nikita*.

Do you have a favourite actor?
Matt Damon.

And a favourite actress?
Maggie Q.

What music do you like to listen to?
I like pop music, for example the Swedish singer Faye.

What was your best result ever?
Winning the 26th Summer Universiade in 2011 in Shenzhen with 8½/9, a 3188 performance ☺.

What was the best game you have ever played?
Hou Yifan-Li Chao, Danzhou 2011.

Who is your favourite chess player of all time?
Before Peter Svidler, because he plays the Grünfeld, now Vladimir Kramnik, because at his age he is still always fighting.

Is there a chess book that had a profound influence on you?
All of Mark Dvoretsky's books.

What was the most exciting chess game you have ever seen?
Guseinov-Ni Hua at the 2014 Olympiad in Tromsø.

What is the best chess country in the world?
Russia.

What are chess players particularly good at (except for chess)?
Besides chess, I think I have some talent for computers and smartphones.

Do chess players have typical shortcomings?
They are too rational.

When were you happiest?
Except for when I lose a game, I am happy most of the time.

Do you have any superstitions concerning chess?
Yes, I have a lucky shirt.

Who or what would you like to be if you weren't yourself?
Kakarotto in the *Dragon Ball* manga series.

Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?
Kobe Bryant, Cristiano Ronaldo and Ronnie O'Sullivan.

Is there something you'd love to learn?
Yes, IT.

What is your favourite place in the world?
Schwäbisch Hall in Germany, which is where my chess club in the Bundesliga is.

What is your greatest fear?
Darkness.

What is your greatest regret?
Until now, this year's Olympiad, where I lost three very important games.

What would you save from your house if it were on fire?
My PC ☺.

How do you relax?
By playing computer games.

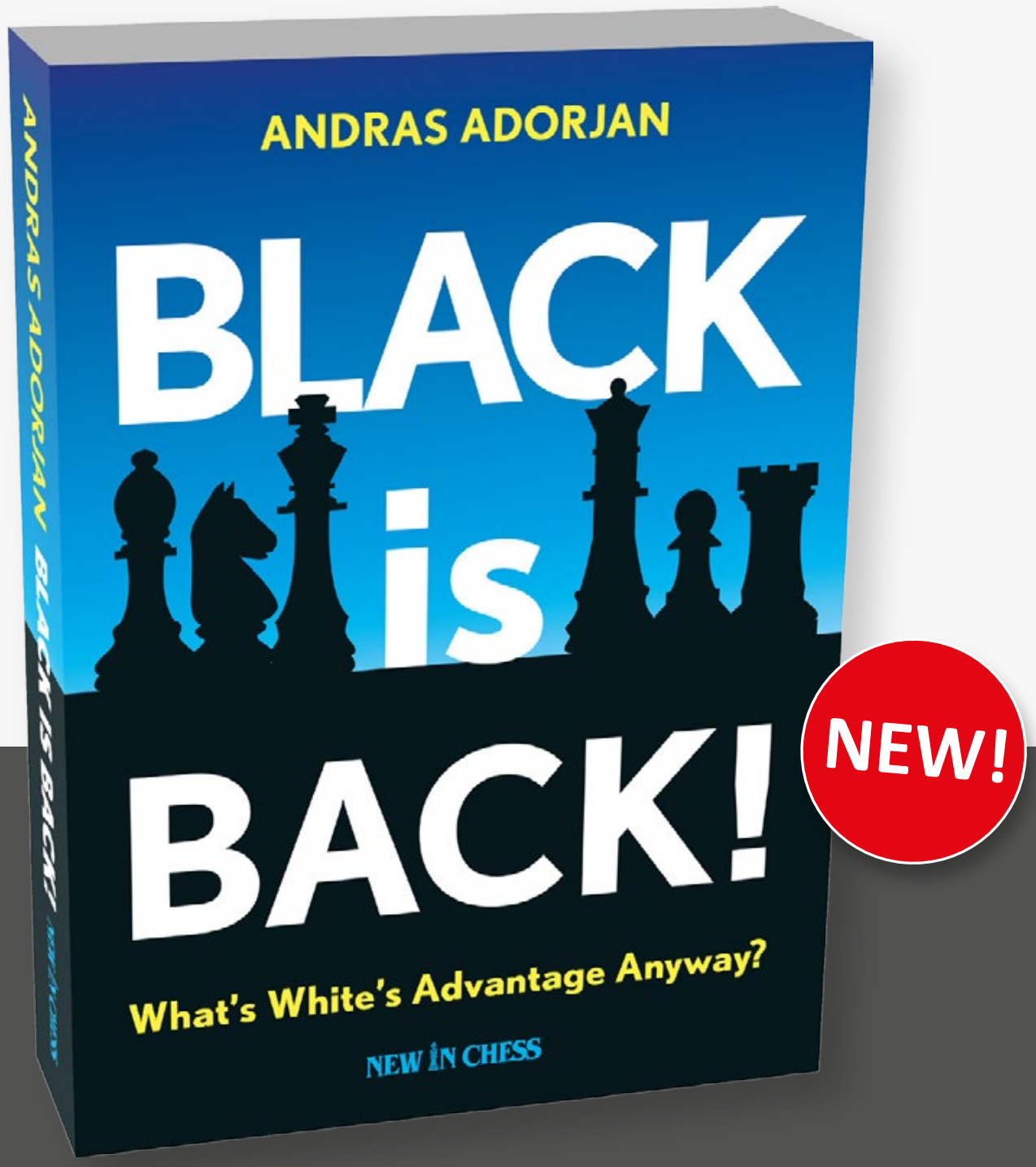
If you could change one thing in the chess world, what would it be?
Remove all chess engines.

What does it mean to be a chess player?
It's a job, but the point is that I love this job.

What will be the nationality of the 2050 chess world champion?
Maybe by then we cannot play chess anymore, because the computer will be so strong that chess will be over.

What is the best thing that has ever been said about chess?
That it's a silent war.

Winning with Black is a matter of attitude



Many chess players act intimidated when they have the black pieces. They are so preoccupied with White's advantage of the first move, that their predominant urge is to defend against possible threats and to safeguard their position. With his iconoclastic *Black is OK* books, Andras Adorjan has consistently been fighting this negative mindset.

In his brilliant new book Adorjan continues his crusade. He shows that White's advantage is far from obvious and that winning with Black starts with having the right attitude. *Black is Back!* is sharp, witty, surprising, entertaining and highly instructive.

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